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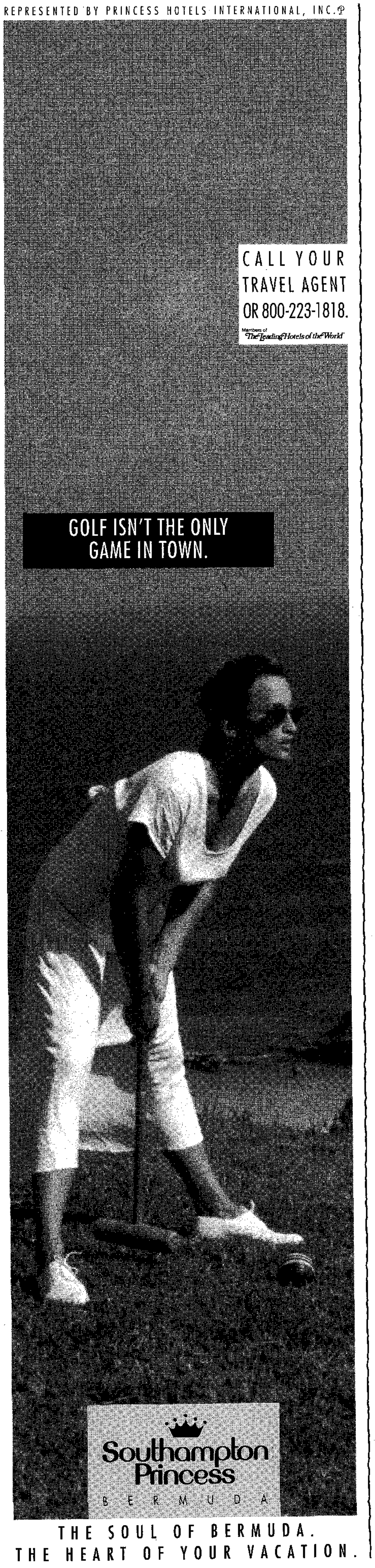
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THE NEW YORKER

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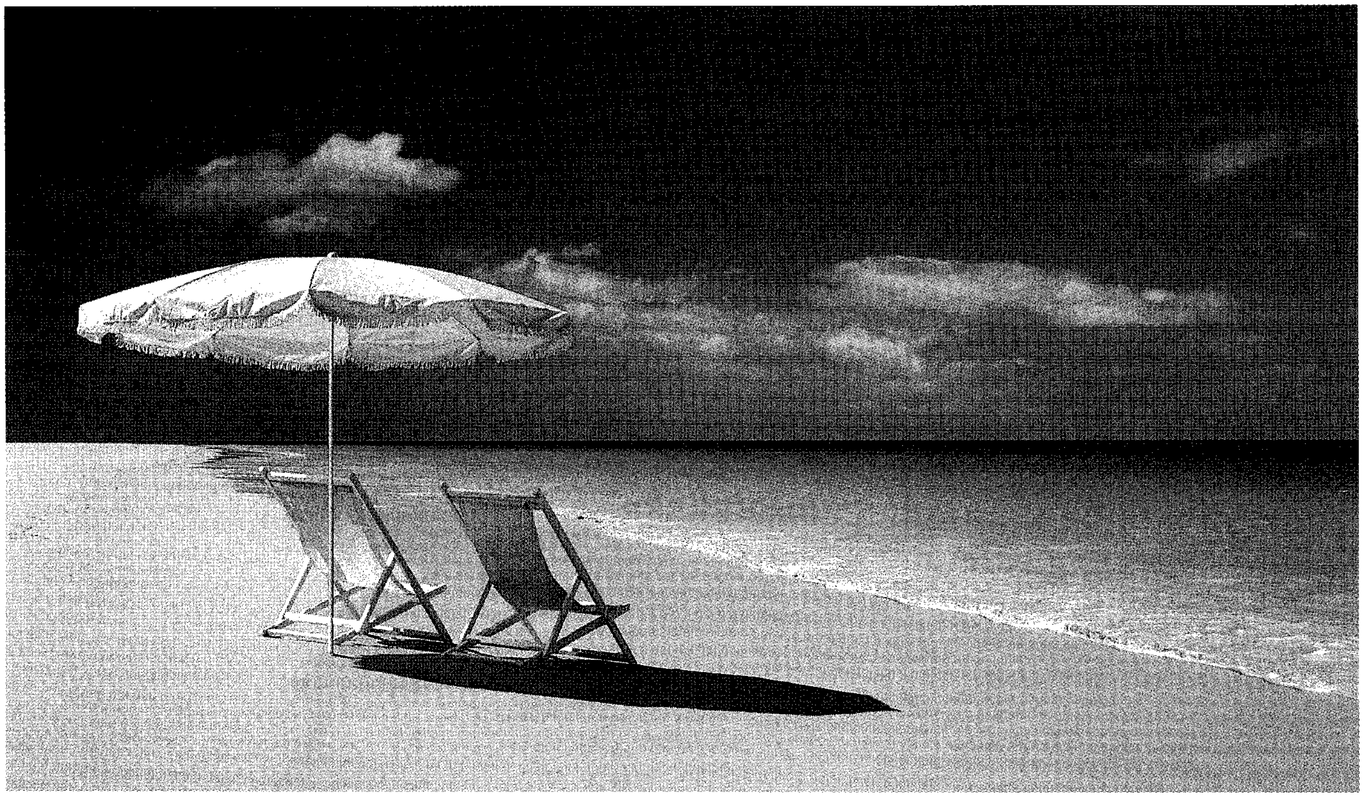
THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly (except for six combined issues: the last week of February and the first week of March, the last week of April and the first week of May, the last week of June and the first week of July, the last week of August and the first week of September, the last two weeks of October, and the last two weeks of December) by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 20 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036. Vol. LXXII, No. 21, July 29, 1996. Periodical postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian Publication Mail Sales Product Agreement No.190969. Canadian goods-and-services-tax registration number R123242885. Registered as a newspaper at the British Post Office. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $39.95; two years, $72.00. In Canada, one year, $83.00 (includes G.S.T.). In Germany, one year, DM290. Mail orders to: IP Internationale Presse, Distribution & Marketing GmbH, Waldstr. 70, D-63128 Dietzenbach, Germany. Other foreign subscriptions, one year, $91.00, payable in advance.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80322. PRINTED IN U.S.A.



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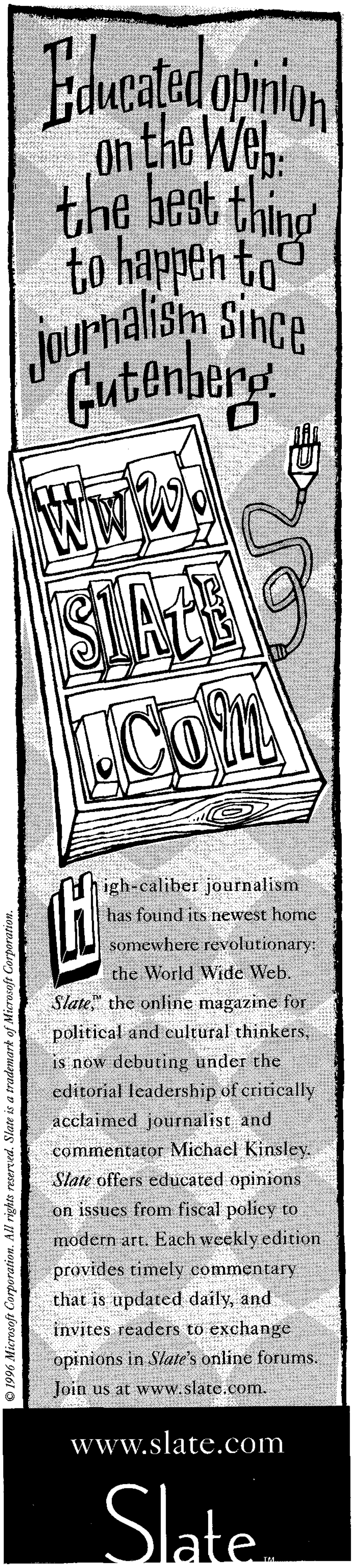

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COMMENT

PEROT'S PREQUELS

Something there is that doesn't like a third party.

ACCORDING to Ross Perot, the Reform Party has been designed not as a vehicle for the ego and ambition of a certain eccentric billionaire but as a serious effort to create a durable political organization capable of competing with the Democrats and the Republicans for a long time to come. Believing this requires a considerable leap of faith. But why not do what Richard Lamm, the former Colorado governor, did when he threw his hat in the Reform ring—take Perot at his word? How likely is the Reform Party to survive?

In most of the world's democracies, third (and sometimes fourth and fifth) parties not only survive but flourish. But American politics is unkind to third parties—and not, as some people contend, on account of any conspiracies among élites. The "two-party system" is the mundane consequence of our political structure. If a party is an assemblage that exists to win office and exercise power, then there is simply no room for a sizable third party in the United States. In much of the democratic world (virtually all of continental Europe except France, for example), parties are awarded a percentage of seats in their legislatures roughly proportionate to their share of the popular vote, and the largest party, or coalition of parties, forms the cabinet. A party that wins ten, or even five, per cent of the vote can play a significant continuing role, either in government or in opposition. But in just about every American election, from the Presidency to the local congressional seat and on down to the school board, the candidate who receives a plurality (never mind a majority) of the vote wins the whole prize—everybody else gets nothing. A party that commands forty per cent of the vote can reasonably hope to win next time out; one that gets ten per cent cannot. And, because the executive branch is entirely separate from the legislative in America, a third party's (hypothetical) strength in one branch doesn't translate into strength in the other.

All the same, third parties are a constant presence in American public life. Most of them have essentially been megaphones for hardy bands of ideologically committed people; such parties achieve success by winning arguments, not elections. The historical template is the old Socialist Party of Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas, which ultimately saw many of its ideas flow into the mainstream; the Libertarian Party and Ralph Nader's Green Party are contemporary examples. Under extremely rare circumstances, of course, a new party can actually supplant one of the existing major parties; the last time that happened was in the eighteen-

THE NEW YORKER, 20 WEST 43RD STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036. Thomas A. Florio, president; Pamela Maffei McCarthy, senior vice-president/deputy editor; Diane M. Silberstein, senior vice-president/publisher; Pamela H. Older, vice-president/manufacturing director; Peter Armour, vice-president/circulation director; Rhonda Pinzer Sherman, vice-president/special-projects director; Maurie Perl, vice-president/public-relations director; Robert A. Silverstone, vice-president/business manager; Richard Levine, vice-president/human-resources director; Jonathan Marder, vice-president/special marketing; Carmen Lopez, associate publisher; Cindy Schreibman, creative services director; Marie Wolpert, marketing director. THE NEW YORKER is not responsible for the return or loss of submissions, or for any damage or other injury to unsolicited manuscripts or artwork. Any submission of a manuscript or artwork must be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope of appropriate size, bearing adequate return postage. The magazine does not consider unsolicited photographs or transparencies. © 1996 by *The New Yorker* Magazine, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of THE NEW YORKER. The periodical's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are registered trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers, Inc., published through its division *The New Yorker* Magazine, Inc.

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fifties, when the Republican Party rose from the ashes of the Whigs. Through most of American history, however, third parties—usually in the form of independent Presidential candidacies—have been important mainly for the ways in which (often unintentionally) they have refocussed or realigned the major parties.

When Theodore Roosevelt ran for President as the candidate of the so-called Bull Moose party, in 1912, he took twenty-seven per cent of the vote (more than William Howard Taft, the Republican incumbent) and insured the election of Woodrow Wilson. Four years later, T.R.'s party was dead. But millions of progressives had been pried loose from the Republican Party, and that process culminated in the historic realignment of party loyalties during the New Deal. In 1968, when George Wallace ran as the candidate of the American Independent Party, he pulled thirteen per cent of the vote and nearly deprived Richard Nixon of victory. Four years later, his party was gone, too. But Wallace provided a way station for disaffected Democrats in the South and elsewhere, and many of them eventually gravitated to the Republicans. The coalition that elected Ronald Reagan in 1980 and a Republican Congress in 1994 had its beginnings in Wallace's caustic, snarling, gleefully anti-élitist politics of race and resentment.

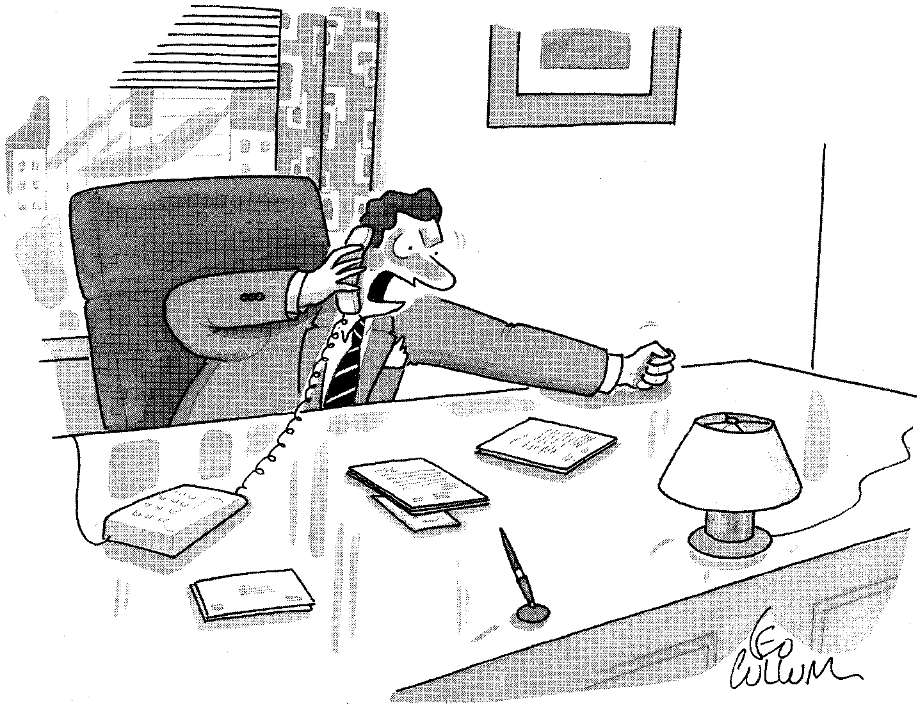
And then, in 1992, came Ross Perot—flaunting his vast fortune, decrying the emptiness of major-party politics, and galvanizing millions of Americans who knew little about him other than that he was neither a Democrat nor a Republican. For a time, Perot led Governor Clinton and President Bush in the polls. Then he abruptly withdrew from the race, explaining that the major parties had begun to respond to his as yet unarticulated message. Later, he claimed (without offering any evidence) that the true reason for his withdrawal had been that unnamed enemies had threatened to disrupt his daughter's wedding—a curious claim, since, in effect, it amounted to boasting that he had surrendered to blackmail and had lied to his followers about it. Not long after that he blithely reëntered the race. And then, even after this loony performance, even after choosing as a running mate a man of stunning political ineptness, even after driving away virtually every important ally he had once attracted—even then, he received nineteen per cent of the vote and deprived Bill Clinton of a majority and, perhaps, a mandate.

The "Perot voters" have become a staple of political punditry, but no one has yet offered a convincing explanation of what drove them to desert the major candidates for so erratic a figure. Some, no doubt, were attracted to Perot's superficial populism—his essentially meaningless commitment to represent "the people" rather than himself (a commitment that never seemed more transparently phony than it did earlier this month, when, after promising an open contest for the Reform Party nomination, Perot set out to smother Lamm's candidacy in its cradle). Others may have shared Perot's xenophobia (though the Perotistas' hostility to aliens is limited to the human variety: strikingly, an absolute majority of UFO contactees plans to vote for the little man with the big ears). And still others perhaps liked his technocratic promise to get under the hood and fix the engine—to cut through the tangle of politics and bring simple common sense to government. Voting for Perot in 1992 was a way to express free-floating fed-upness. His was an unusual third-party movement—wildly successful in attracting votes, but unmoored to any clear set of ideas or programs. Unlike T.R. or Debs or Wallace, Perot represented a yearning not so much for a new politics as for an end to politics.

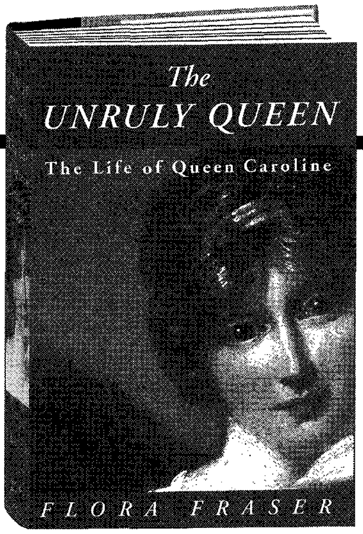
Perot enters the 1996 campaign considerably weaker than he was four years ago. The ideological differences between the Democrats and the Republicans are more salient this year, despite the energetic efforts of both major-party candidates to obscure them. And Perot himself is somewhat shopworn. Instead of riding the crest of a spontaneous uprising, he is running, it seems, mostly out of inertia, pulled along by the machinery he created in order to keep his options open. He has become just another politician groping for a rationale. He will not be elected President. More likely, he will fall victim to the antipolitical politics he himself midwifed. The disenchantment and anger he tapped four years ago are not likely to make much difference in November. His Reform Party will probably fade away soon afterward.

And the "Perot voters," whoever they may be, will probably not become the agents of a major-party realignment; parties are now so weak and voters so uninterested in them that it is hard to imagine any firm or lasting new coalitions taking shape anytime soon. But the resentments that Perot helped unleash persist, as yet unaddressed by mainstream politics. Given enough gridlock, frustration, and insecurity, the electorate, for good or for ill, may yet give this country its first non-major-party President since Washington—in 2000, perhaps, or in 2004, or in 2008. But not this time.

—Alan Brinkley



"Don't you threaten me, Felner! I have a law degree and I know how to use it."



THE UNRULY QUEEN

Flora Fraser's biography of Queen Caroline is "scholarly but spicy, racy as well as elegantly written, mingling low comedy with pathos, even tragedy...in great and entertaining detail." —PAUL JOHNSON
The Wall Street Journal

"It does justice to a fascinating woman who was tragic, brave, likable, humorous and, indeed, unruly... A splendid biography."
—RICHARD ACTON,
The Literary Review (London)

"First-rate biography, a solid, stylish book about a very odd couple." —The New Yorker

"Written with elegance, wit and narrative zest that novelists might envy."
—The Economist (London)

"Thoroughly enjoyable ...Should be required reading for anyone who needs reminding that the behavior of the royals and of the press was once a good deal worse than it is today."
—SARAH BRADFORD,
The Daily Telegraph (London)

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IN THE MAIL

FAILING STUDENTS

Melanie Thernstrom's account of the murder of Trang Ho by her roommate, Sinedu Tadesse, at Harvard last year ("Diary of a Murder," June 3rd) reminded me of my experience as a student there in the late eighties. I can testify that the advising system is neither "carefully woven" (as one dean put it) nor sufficient. When a close friend needed help, I spoke to University Health Services, my house adviser, and various peer-counselling groups. In each case, I was told that the college would not interfere unless my friend herself explicitly asked for help. As any competent mental-health professional will attest, many disturbed individuals cannot even admit that they have a problem, let alone seek out help. I left Harvard grateful to my professors for a rich academic experience but angry at an institution that seemed to feel that if you see no evil and hear no evil, it will simply melt into the air.

CATHERINE HARRIES
Brooklyn, N.Y.

This spring, the Johns Hopkins University also suffered a homicide, and a fellow-student is the alleged assailant. In my former role as a psychiatrist for the campus, I was struck by the continual conflict between the interests of the students and those of the university. Many students at our universities endure serious episodic psychiatric illnesses that can be quickly treated if they are properly diagnosed. All too often, however, self-scrutiny by the universities (which could lead to improved mental-health care) is eclipsed by their need to protect themselves from blame. And thus arises the sad and disturbing air of inevitability that Ms. Thernstrom so eloquently describes.

MARGARET S. CHISOLM, M.D.
Baltimore, Md.

THE SCIENCE OF SIN

Malcolm Gladwell (in his Dept. of Disputation, June 3rd) points out the existence of "tipping points" that affect the prevalence of epidemics and of violence. In my research as a professor of population dynamics, I have argued that individuals as well as societies have tipping points and that an individual's tipping point, called a threshold, depends, in part, on how many people he sees engaging in any given behavior before he is willing to do so himself. It is the distribution of thresholds within a population which determines where and when tipping points are reached.

THOMAS W. VALENTE
The Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, Md.

Mr. Gladwell suggests that "it may sound odd to talk about the things people do as analogous to the diseases they catch." What is stunning is how consonant this premise is with the much misunderstood and oft maligned Christian doctrine of original sin. In Romans, Paul speaks of sin coming, viruslike, "into the world through one man" and "spread[ing] to all." One need not suppose Adam to have been a historical human being to recognize, as Gladwell does, that "social problems behave like infectious agents."

THE REVEREND NILS BLATZ
Brooklyn, N.Y.

SAMSA REVISITED

Robert McCrum's eloquent and engrossing description of his stroke and its consequences ("Personal History," May 27th) recalls Franz Kafka's "Metamorphosis." In that story, of course, Gregor Samsa awakes to find himself transformed into a gigantic insect, and responds to his bizarre plight with the same detached curiosity and bemusement that McCrum reports having experienced upon waking after his cerebral accident. What McCrum conveys so movingly is the way that his identity was once tied to his physical habitation, the way that so much of what he had thought of as "himself" was a matter of daily routine and physical motion. McCrum's metamorphosis, like Samsa's, has led him not to the discovery of a new personality but to a more careful definition of the "self" that he has always been.

W. EDWARD BLAIN
Woodberry Forest, Va.

WHAT SHOULD ISRAEL BE?

Bernard Avishai ("Israel vs. Israel," Comment, June 10th) refuses to acknowledge the obvious: that the nearly sixty per cent of Israeli Jews who voted for Benjamin Netanyahu were expressing concern for the heedless pace of a "peace" process that may yield not peace but a threat to survival. But most egregious is Avishai's denigration of the implicit support of the majority for those values which define national identity: shared cultural traditions and love of homeland—concepts that in no way undermine Israel's commitment to the rights of all its citizens.

JACK E. FRIEDMAN
Kew Gardens, N.Y.

Mr. Avishai portrays the security camp in Israel as frightened xenophobes seeking the simplistic solace of religious certainty. What confuses me is why liberal Americans who quite incisively criticize the economic, political, cultural, and moral shortcomings of their society cry foul when another society dares to choose a more meaningful path for itself. For many Israelis, the rejection of Peres in favor of Netanyahu was a rejection of the "New Middle East," in which American cultural hegemony would replace thousands of years of Jewish culture.

EVAN STEELE
Jerusalem, Israel

REMEMBERING MR. MITCHELL

I was a copyboy at the *Herald Tribune* when Joseph Mitchell (Postscript, June 10th) became a hero to us one Sunday night in 1930 or '31. Ogden Reid, the publisher, came into the city room, as he sometimes did, and entered the aisle where Mitchell was typing away. As Reid passed Mitchell, who always wrote with his fedora pushed up above his brow, he swept his hand across the fedora and off it flew. Without looking to see who had done this, Mitchell grabbed an ink bottle from his littered desk and flung it at the back of the retreating Reid. He missed Reid by a mile, but the ink landed on the city editor's desk. When I came in the next day, Mitchell's impiety was the talk of the office. Apparently, he had been spoken to about his high crime, and shortly thereafter got the idea that he'd be better off if he found a job elsewhere. We copyboys worried about Mitchell—getting a job wasn't easy during the Depression. But then we began reading him in the other dailies, and in *The New Yorker*. Harold Ross's discovery was already well known to us.

ARNOLD BEICHMAN
Naramata, Canada

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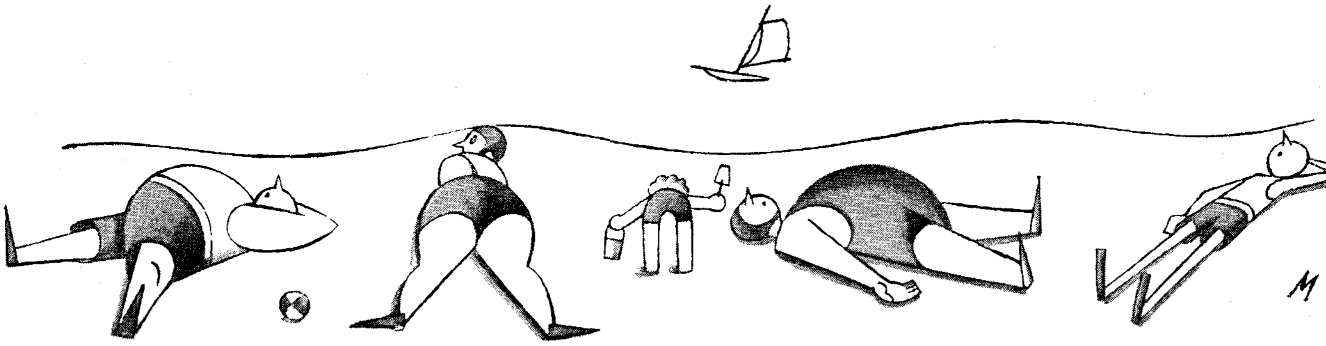

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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28	29	30				

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

The Beckett Festival—Dublin's Gate Theatre is in town to present Samuel Beckett's complete works for the stage—nineteen plays in all—as part of the Lincoln Center Festival 96. Performances begin July 29 at 6 and continue through Aug. 11. (Lincoln Center. For schedule information and tickets, call 721-6500.)

The Cocoanuts—The American Jewish Theatre's production of the Irving Berlin–George S. Kaufman musical (which starred the Marx Brothers in 1925) reopens at a new theatre on July 27 at 2. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

Hughie—Al Pacino stars as the blowhard gambler Erie Smith, in his own staging of Eugene O'Neill's 1941 drama. Previews begin July 24. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change—A revue tracing the ups and downs of courtship, with book and lyrics by Joe DiPietro and music by Jimmy Roberts. Directed by Joel Bishoff. In previews. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Love's Labour's Lost—The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival's second and final offering of the summer. Previews, which begin July 24, run in repertory with the company's current production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 1-914 265-9575.)

Orestes: I Murdered My Mother—Jeff Cohen's updating of the Euripides play, in which the tabloid press takes a crack at the matricide and his sister Electra. Previews July 25-27. Opens July 28 at 5. (One Dream, 232 W. Broadway. 279-4200.)

Phaedra—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company presents Everett Quinton in a one-man Greek tragicomedy, about the queen who fell for her stepson. In previews through July 27. Opens July 28 at 7. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 307-4100.)

Playing with Fire: The Danger Plays—Ten original works featuring children ages eight to twelve, all members of the 52nd Street Project, which pairs young Hell's Kitchen residents with theatre people. The professional actors and writers include Lili Taylor, Alison Fraser, Russell Lees, and Thom Babe. The short engagement takes place July 25-28. (Ensemble Studio Theatre, 549 W. 52nd St. Admission is free, but reservations are required; call 642-5052.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Acts of Providence—Two one-acts by Edward Allan Baker: "Dead Man's Apartment," a comedy about a man who uses his lunch hour to fight with his mistress, and "Dolores," a drama about two sisters whose lives are affected by domestic violence. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820. Closes Aug. 11.)

Aliens in America—Humorist Sandra Tsing Loh's ill-matched parents—a cheap, passive-aggressive, serial-marrying Chinese father and a towering, peach-schnapps-drinking, party-loving German mother—were brought together by the vagaries of history and a shiny Buick; Loh, as a typically Southern Californian daughter, wonders where she figures in the equation. The three engaging vignettes in her autobiographical monologue are driven by intelligence and the healing power of expressive fury. The unobtrusive but crisp direction is by Steve Kaplan. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes July 29.)

American Style—Paul Boocock and David Latham have been performing together for three years as Premium Bob, the kind of aggressively intelligent and truly weird act you might have spotted on Letterman in the early eighties. In their new show, they forge a hilarious evening out of elements as incongruous as a writer obsessed with imagining the thoughts of the young Martin Luther, a man who fabricates a girl-child from scraps of denim and names her "The George Michael Sports Machine" after his favorite TV show, and the American public's fascination with cosmetic depilation. Thursdays at 8, through Aug. 15. (Workhouse, 41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 431-9220.)

Big—This adaptation of the movie that starred Tom Hanks and Elizabeth Perkins provides little joy, though Daniel Jenkins, as the twelve-year-old in a grownup's body, is sweet and likable. The dance numbers are full of grimly talented, grinning kiddies—it's like a midget minstrel show—the score is melodically challenged, and the patronizing book has lost all the movie's charm and poignancy. Directed by Mike Ockrent. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/27/96.) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

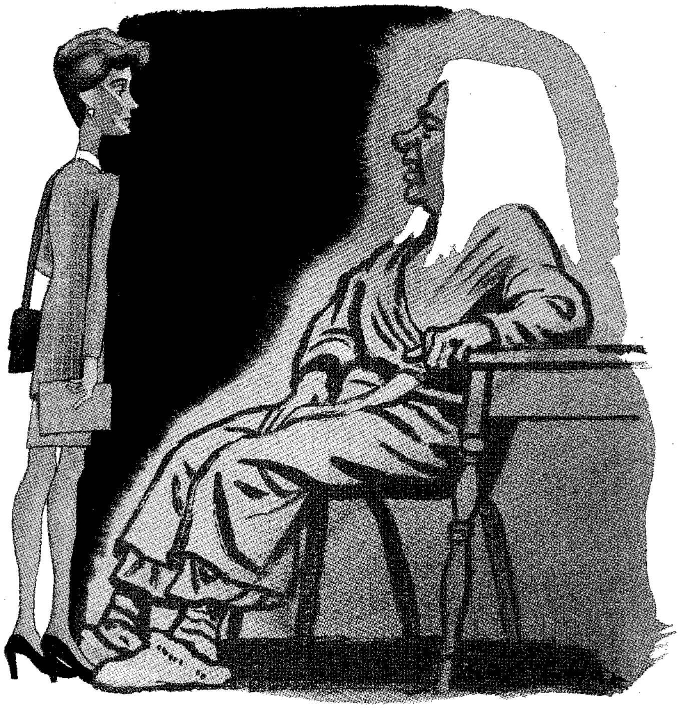
The Boys in the Band—James Lecesne, as the swishy Emory, and David Greenspan, as the lethal Harold, have a field day in Mart Crowley's study of gay self-hatred. The script no longer seems particularly shocking (except in its viciousness) or politically suspect, but it holds up soundly in this impressive revival, which was supervised by the playwright and directed with buckets of bile by Kenneth Elliott. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Closes Aug. 3.)

Bring In da Noise, Bring In da Funk—In director George C. Wolfe and dancer-choreographer Savion Glover's heroically energetic musical—which charts the evolution of the African-American beat from its rural Southern beginnings to its Northern urbanization and on to its present hip-hop incarnation—the extraordinary Glover and his sensational group of young tap dancers and street drummers bring joy. They bring fury. They bring history and ecstasy. (5/20/96) (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Cowgirls—By the end of this appealing, if somewhat predictable, musical comedy, three chamber musicians have been transformed into fringe-wearin', honky-tonkin' cowgirls. Mary Murfitt, the show's composer and lyricist, is hilarious as an uptight violinist learning how to shake it. Betsy Howie, who wrote the book, is also in the fine cast. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Da—Brian Murray has the title role in a revival of the Irish playwright Hugh Leonard's semiautobiographical 1973 drama, about a man vexed by his father's ghost. Directed by Charlotte Moore. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

A Delicate Balance—Decorous suburban ennui is transformed into real angst in this bracing, astringent revival of Edward Albee's 1966 play about a family that has sacrificed much of its humanity for the sake of



Lucie Arnaz and Estelle Parsons, in "Grace & Glorie."

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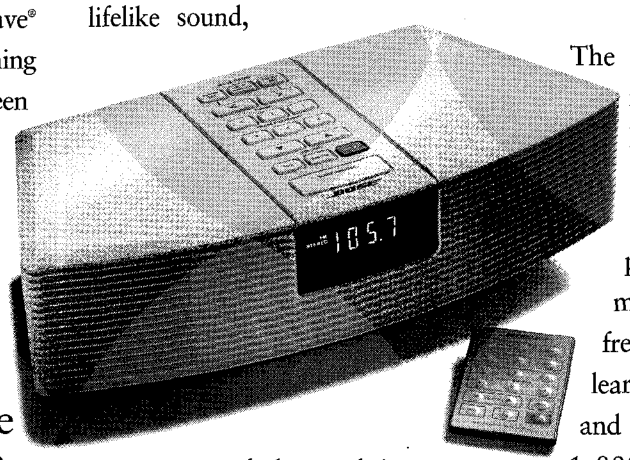

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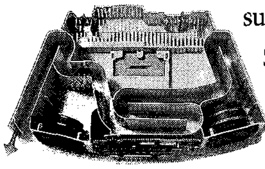

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appearances. The cast, under the fine direction of Gerald Gutierrez, is uniformly excellent. (5/27/96) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Forbidden Hollywood—Gerard Alessandrini's hit-and-miss movie-biz sendup. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum—Burt Shevelove, Larry Gelbart, and Stephen Sondheim's 1962 musical-comedy version of a Roman farce is a joke play that begs for outrageousness, but Jerry Zaks's peppy, acrylic revival seldom enters that giddy zone of comic daring. (5/20/96) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Grace & Glorie—Estelle Parsons plays a ninety-year-old illiterate mountain woman whose last days are interrupted by a well-meaning hospice volunteer (Lucie Arnaz) who has an M.B.A. from Harvard and has moved to Virginia to escape her own tragedy. Tom Ziegler's tale is utterly predictable but charmingly told, and under Gloria Muzio's direction the performances of the two actresses make the blend of humor and pathos affecting rather than cloying. Parsons captures the spirit of the play when she wears makeup for the first time: her smile is a perfect combination of mischievous pleasure at her appearance and serene lack of regret that she hasn't had such benefits before. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-9393.)

An Ideal Husband—In Oscar Wilde's hundred-and-one-year-old play, a youthful transgression comes back to threaten the career of a promising Cabinet member. The man who saves the day is played, with showy aplomb, by Martin Shaw. The rest of the delightful, mostly British cast, under the direction of Peter Hall, is well up to the Wildean wit and wisdom, and the evening flies by in a flash of epigrammatic splendor. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

In My Father's House—A new drama by Samm-Art Williams, in which a black L.A. cop deals with the 1992 riots and their effect on his family. (Billie Holiday, 1368 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-0918. Closes July 28.)

Jasper in Gramercy Park—A comedy about an aging couple who are unusually devoted to their big, domineering dog. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 598-2385.)

The King and I—In a word, magnificent. Hats off to Donna Murphy, as Anna, Lou Diamond Phillips, as the King of Siam, and everyone else (including Rodgers and Hammerstein, of course) who had a hand in this production. Christopher Renshaw directed. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Love Thy Neighbor—Jackie Mason's latest two-hour monologue: his range may be limited, but his timing is perfect, and the house rocks with laughter. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Making Porn—Rex Chandler has the role of the straight star Jack Hawk in Ronnie Larsen's play about the gay-porn business. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 239-6200.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival production runs in repertory with preview performances of "Love's Labour's Lost." (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 1-914 265-9575. Closes Aug. 4.)

Rent—The late Jonathan Larson's rock opera, inspired by Puccini's "La Bohème," stands every assumption of the traditional musical on its head. It can't support the narrative overload (eight separate stories are told), yet by the end of the evening Larson's talent has taken the audience to places the musical never ventures these days. Directed by Michael Greif. (2/19/96) (Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.)

Seven Guitars—August Wilson's exciting new play, which flashes back to the final days of a Pittsburgh blues singer (Keith David), sends us stirring news of black life in the late forties. The seven guitars of the title are the seven memorable characters whose high times and dashed dreams Wilson turns into beautiful, complex music—a funky, wailing, irresistible Chicago blues. Lloyd Richards is the director. (4/15/96) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You—Christopher Durang's 1979 comedy, starring Geraldine Librandi and directed by Mark Cannistraro. Saturdays at 6. (Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. S. 255-5438.)

A Thousand Clowns—The Roundabout Theatre's revival of Herb Gardner's 1962 comedy captures the era so nicely that you almost fail to notice that both Judd Hirsch (who played the same role thirty-two years ago) and many of the issues in the play are now somewhat dated. The jokes are still funny, and the star is still likable as Murray Burns, the eccentric who quits his job writing for the detestable "Chuckles the Chipmunk" show with no other means of supporting his twelve-year-old wunderkind nephew (played precociously but not preciously, and with great eyebrow action, by Dov Tiefenbach). David Margulies, Jim Fyfe, and Marin Hinkle are all just right in supporting roles, but it's John Procaccino, as Chuckles the Chipmunk, who steals the show. Directed by Scott Ellis. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes Aug. 11.)

Toddfest '96—Final performances in a monthlong festival of works by Todd Alcott. July 25-28 at 7:30: "A Pound of Flesh," directed by the playwright. . . . ¶ July 25-28 at 10: "Birds and Ashes," directed by Aaron Beall and Vivian Sorenson. . . . ¶ July 27 at midnight: "The Alcott File," directed by Jason Sturm and Bob Sikoryak. (Nada, 167 Ludlow St. 420-1466.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **MASTER CLASS:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **VICTOR/VICTORIA:** Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

DANCE

Lyons Opera Ballet—The choreographer Maguy Marin updates "Coppélia," with a suburbanite sporting a blond wig and a little red dress in place of the traditional doll come to life. (New York State Theatre. 721-6500. July 23 at 8 and July 24 at 2 and 7.)

Philadanco—In 1992, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Urban Bush Women's founder and choreographer, jetted to Jamaica to investigate dance styles that, like her own, showed a strong African influence. Company member Maia Claire Garrison, who went with her, reports that they spent a lot of time "watching the women in dance halls in their 'batty riders' "—shorts so short they ride up the batty (pronounced, in the Jamaican fashion, *bah*-tee). In the resulting work, the ten-minute solo "Batty Moves," Garrison danced the movements they had documented, with her backside facing the audience. Philadanco, the Philadelphia-based dance company, recently added the work to its repertory, with Hope Boykin in the role because, according to Garrison, Boykin "had the meat on the butt and the fire that fits the part." Boykin, who performs the piece in a costume with a large X stitched across her buttocks, says "It gives me the chance to be myself." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. July 23-26 at 8 and July 27 at 2 and 8.)

Dances for Wave Hill—When asked about the guest artists she recruited for "Red Rover," the choreographer Rosanna Gamson explains, "They can't dance, can't sing, can't act. They're kind of triple threats." However, the dancers—summer campers from the nearby Riverdale Neighborhood House—have proved helpful with scriptwriting, providing lists of things they hate (cockroaches, spinach, war) and suggestions for mothers ("Give me forty dollars not to kill my friend"). While the little ones run around, ten exaggeratedly adult professionals—practiced stilt walkers, a soprano on a ladder in a hoop skirt twenty-five feet wide, and so on—will try their best to civilize the unleashed forces. Sabrina Peck and Andy Tierstein, as well as the Pearl Ubungen Dancers and Musicians, also appear, in "Waiting" and "Refugee," respectively. (W. 249th St. at Independence Ave., the Bronx. For information, call 1-718 549-3200. July 24 at 6:30 and July 28 at 5.)

OUT OF TOWN

New York City Ballet—July 24 at 8:15: "Concerto Barocco," "Romeo and Juliet," "Schoenberg-Wuorinen Variations," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ July 25 at 2: "Donizetti Variations," "In G Major," and "Symphony in Three Movements." . . . ¶ July 25 at 8:15: "Symphony in C," "Schoenberg-Wuorinen Variations," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ July 26 at 8:15: "Symphony in Three Movements," "In G Major," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ July 27 at 2: "Concerto Barocco," "Romeo and Juliet," "Touch," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ July 27 at 8:15: "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet," "Schoenberg-Wuorinen Variations," and "Symphony in C." (Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 1-518 587-3330.)

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—July 23 at 7, July 25-26 at 8, July 27 at 5, and July 28 at 7: Everett Dance Theatre. . . . ¶ July 23-26 at 8:30 and July 27 at 2 and 8:30: Paul Taylor Dance Company. . . . ¶ July 25 at 7: Lisa Race. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 243-0745.)

PHILIPPE PETIT-ROULET

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Gipsy Kings—Talent runs in the family of this seven-man band, all of whose members—authentic gypsies from France—are related. Led by the plangent vocals of Nicolas Reyes and the rollicking guitar of Tonino Baliardo, the Kings have dominated the world-music charts for the past seven years with their fiery flamenco. They show an enticingly dreamy side on their new album, "Tierra Gitana." Never fear, though: the band that gave the world "Bamboleo" still knows how to shake it up. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. July 24 at 8.)

Natalie Merchant—Devotees regard the former lead singer of 10,000 Maniacs as the embodiment of everything that's good and right in the world. But pretty much everyone else thinks she's way too schoolmarmish to be a rock star. (Of course, so is her buddy Michael Stipe, and he doesn't get half the flak.) Still, her intentions are as pure as her warm, tangy voice. And some of the frail folk-pop ditties on her first solo album, "Tigerlily," do grow on you after a few listens, provided that you stay awake. (Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. July 24 at 8.)

"All the Way Back!"—Woody Allen, auteur and part-time clarinettist, adds a third New York locale (the two others are his apartment and Michael's Pub) to the sites where he plays his licorice stick. Also featured are pianists Dick Hyman, Terry Waldo, and Mike Lipskin and blues vocalist Carrie Smith. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. July 25 at 8.)

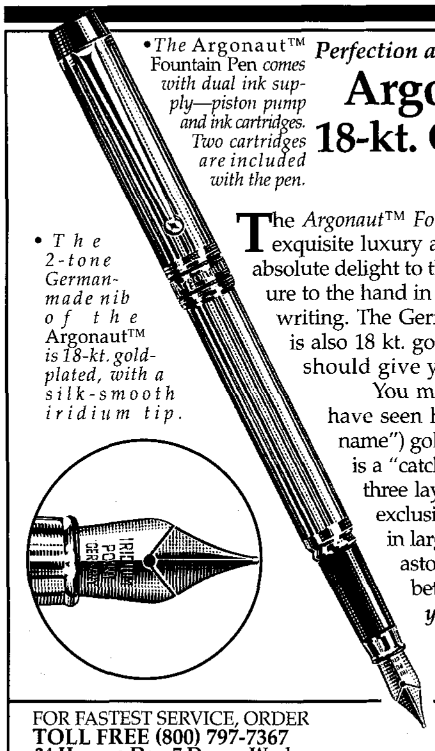
Kiss—The fact that Kiss *and* the Village People are both enjoying high-profile comebacks speaks volumes about the true legacy of seventies pop. But unlike the Village People, Kiss never got its own joke—which is probably why Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons can keep wagging their respective tongues and rears with shameless glee. On this much-ballyhooed reunion tour, which finds the band donning makeup and codpieces for the first time since the early eighties, original members Peter Criss and Ace Frehley are once again along for the ride. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. July 25-28 at 8.)

Allen Toussaint—He's been a major force on the New Orleans music scene, writing great songs for great performers, for five decades. Etta James, Dr. John, Irma Thomas, and the Neville Brothers have all recorded his work. A marvellously understated singer and an excellent pianist with a driving, rhythmic style, Toussaint has a gumbo elegance that leaves audiences enraptured. (Prospect Park Bandshell, Brooklyn. No tickets necessary. July 26 at 7.)

Butthole Surfers—This travelling Texas freak show has influenced nearly every punk band around. Now, after thirteen years of acid-drenched atonal noise, they're actually playing straight-ahead punk themselves. "Electriclarryland," the group's new record, sports their first bona-fide alternative hit, "Pepper," a meditation on life and death spiced up with a sitar. Their unrelenting chaos has been replaced by well-written if slightly twisted songs—a welcome trade-off. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. July 26 at 7.)

Celine Dion—Since her promising 1990 début, "Unison," this French-Canadian belter has become the queen of film soundtracks: "Beauty and the Beast," "When I Fall in Love" (from "Sleepless in Seattle"), and "Because You Loved Me" (from "Up Close & Personal") have all been monster hits. Lost in the top-forty bombast is her remarkably supple voice: she's most at home with ballads and neo-disco fluff. (Jones Beach Theatre. July 26 at 8. . . . ¶ Theatre at Madison Square Garden. July 29 at 8.)

Koko Taylor—In 1965, this tornado of a singer shook the rafters of Chicago's fabled Chess Records studios with "Wang Dang Doodle," her classic duet with Willie Dixon. As the reigning queen of the blues, she's won more W. C. Handy Awards than any other female



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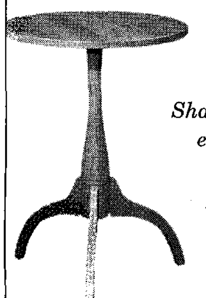

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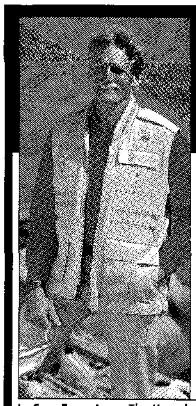

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blues performer—and, at sixty, she can still raise a roof or two. With blues great Son Seals. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 27 at 3.)

Sam Moore & the Uptown Horns—R. & B. in Brooklyn with the Sam from Sam and Dave. (Prospect Park Bandshell. July 27 at 7.)

The Isleys—It's their thing—and for forty years these soul-music giants have been doing what they want to do with it. Name the decade—they gave you a hit. The fifties brought "Shout," the sixties "This Old Heart of Mine," the seventies "Who's That Lady?," the eighties "Spend the Night (Ce Soir)." Their latest album, "Mission to Please," was produced by the young R. & B. star R. Kelly, and its single "Let's Lay Together" is a fine way to finish out the millennium. (Theatre at Madison Square Garden. July 27 at 8.)

James Taylor—During a recent appearance on "Today," Taylor was asked if he did anything to connect with younger audiences. "Well," he mused, "I've been on 'Sesame Street' a few times." This sort of easygoing self-deprecation has helped the former superstar keep his career in perspective. He hasn't released a new album since "New Moon Shine," in 1991, but that doesn't keep both old and new fans from attending his regular tours to bathe in his gentle folk-rock wisdom. (Jones Beach Theatre. July 27-28 at 8.)

Isaac Hayes—A former house producer and writer for Stax, Black Moses was responsible for such Sam and Dave hits as "Soul Man" and "When Something Is Wrong with My Baby." He later put out a series of gritty funk albums which culminated, of course, in the mega-platinum, Academy Award-winning "Shaft." Bad films and uneven records followed, but Hayes made a stunning comeback last year with two fine disks, "Branded" and the instrumental "Raw and Refined." When this bald icon steps up to the mike, there won't be a still heart in the house. With Booker T. & the MGs. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. July 29 at 8.)

Squeeze—In an acoustic performance. (Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. 921-1940. July 30 at 8.)

Hootie and the Blowfish—*While the production* is crisp and Darius Rucker's singing has a sufficient measure of urgency, much of the Hootie phenomenon can be attributed to sheer averageness: the band sounds like a bunch of friendly frat boys whooping it up on the quad. "Fairweather Johnson," their follow-up to the astronomically successful "Cracked Rear View" (fourteen million units and still going strong), offers another dose of the Rock 101 that turned them into a Capraesque bar-band-makes-good tale. (Madison Square Garden. July 30 at 8.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **PHILLIP OFFICER** wraps up an extended run on July 27. **DIANA KRALL** casts a glow over the Oak Room starting July 30. A witty singer and insouciant pianist, Krall is just a whisper from true maturity. Having studied with the late Jimmy Rowles, she makes growing up in public a wonder to behold. Dining.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Is **VALERY PONOMAREV** (July 26-27) the greatest hard-bop trumpeter to emerge from Russia, or are there other nascent Lee Morgans somewhere on the steppes? Only time will tell. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—The **COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA** (directed by Grover Mitchell) lays it down through July 28. Starting July 30: the **HORACE SILVER** septet and **RAY BARRETTO AND NEW WORLD SPIRIT.** Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through July 27: when pianist **DAVE KIKOSKI,** bassist **ED HOWARD,** and drummer **LEON PARKER** come together as a trio, swiftness and swing are assured. The gifted Parker works with next to nothing—a cymbal, a snare, maybe a tomtom—but what he turns out is pure rhythm. He can't help but steal the show.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through July 28: the Michel Camilo trio. The **JOHN PIZZARELLI** trio gets the call starting July 30. An agile musician and a pleasant low-key crooner from the Chet Baker/Alfalfa school, *Pizzarelli has one of the best-sounding cabaret acts in town.* Dining.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—Woodstock veteran **RICHIE HAVENS** is in the midst of an extended run. Closed Mondays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through July 28: **ROBIN EUBANKS AND MENTAL IMAGES.** We need all the young trombonists we can get, but Eubanks makes it tough on himself. An assured player in conventional groups, he tarts up his own gigs with electronic effects that distort his sound; then he solos ad nauseam, as if he were being paid by the minute. Still, if you're in an open-minded mood, his funky excursions may be just the thing. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—When **BRANFORD MARSALIS** (in with a trio through July 28) took the ill-fated second-banana gig on the Leno show, he was king of the hill. Imagine his surprise when he reëntered the jazz world and found it swarming with hot young saxophonists like Joshua Redman, James Carter, Craig Handy, Tim Warfield, and Don Braden. There's no need to fear for him, though—those brief musical interludes on "The Tonight Show" may actually have been good for him. But the ratio of inspiration to length in his recent solos, particularly in trio settings, has fallen somewhat. The **LOU DONALDSON** quartet takes over on July 30. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—The vibraphone seems to be falling out of favor among jazz performers, but **JOE LOCKE** (July 24-27) isn't having any of that. He's a swift, knowing player who enlivens any bandstand. Dining.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through July 27: piano and bass with **HAROLD MABERN** and **JAMIL NASSER.** These two Memphis transplants have been playing together for decades in the George Coleman quartet. How they keep the spark going is anyone's guess, but they never fail to blaze. Dining.

Kiss, at Madison Square Garden.

TAKESHI TADATSU

ROCK, ETC.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—You might say that **JANE SIBERRY** (July 29) has a multiple personality. "Bound by the Beauty," the singer's 1989 album, was ripe with schoolgirl charm (one track was called "Everything Reminds Me of My Dog"). "When I Was a Boy," the album after that, was a moody art-rock opus. Her latest effort, "Maria," has a piano-and-muted-trumpet palette, and it might almost qualify as jazz.

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—**CHAVEZ** (July 26), a kind of indie-rock supergroup, featuring former members of Live Skull and Bullet LaVolta.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—July 24: **PROFESSOR AND MARYANNE.** This impossibly precocious Staten Island duo has chosen its name with surprising acuity. Like their "Gilligan's Island" namesakes, they balance the cerebral (courtesy of guitarist-songwriter Ken Rockwell) with dark good looks (from helium-throated singer Danielle Brancaccio).

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—July 26-27: **GUITAR SHORTY.** This Texas bluesman cut his first singles in the late fifties, around the time that Otis Rush and Buddy Guy were making their débuts. *But recording tape has never fully captured* the excitement of his live act.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—July 26: **JAZZHOLE.** The last time this huge and excellent acid-jazz ensemble performed here (it includes three vocalists, two rappers, and ten or so additional musicians), some of its members nearly fell off the stage. But the crowd was having too good a time to notice.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—July 26: The **HEALTH AND HAPPINESS SHOW.** This sprightly band, led by ex-Bongo James Mastro, called its 1993 début album "Tonic," and its blend of country, folk, and rock is just that. Thanks to the exciting addition of ex-Television guitarist Richard Lloyd, "Instant Living," the group's latest, has a decidedly harder edge. July 30: **JONATHA BROOKE,** a singer-songwriter whose breezy wit falls somewhere between Suzanne Vega's and Christine Lavin's, and **RUFUS WAINWRIGHT,** whose folk intensity is genetically driven: his parents are Loudon Wainwright and Kate McGarrigle. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—July 30-31: **PAUL WESTERBERG.** Considering all the adolescent-angst-ridden alternative-rock groups that the Replacements helped launch, perhaps the most important thing that can be said about their former leader's wonderful new solo record, "Eventually," is that it's the work of a bona-fide adult. "A good day is any day that you're alive," he sings in a sober (but still defiant) voice; if young hellions can pick up on what he's saying, perhaps there's still hope for rock and roll after all.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—July 24: **LOTION.** July 25: San Francisco's **IMPERIAL TEEN** play a glorious, whooshing pop, unstoppable and unforgettable. The band members all switch instruments and take turns at the microphone, and their songs are stamped with a youthful enthusiasm that belies their considerable experience (keyboardist Roddy Bottum doubles with Faith No More) and the dark subtext of dysfunction, suicide, and addiction which permeates "Seasick," their frisky débût. July 27: **TUSCADERO.** July 29: The **SCUD MOUNTAIN BOYS,** who play spry country rock that's nearly as cool as their name, and **DAN ZANES,** a wafer-thin rock-and-roller, formerly of the Del Fuegos, who writes dark, dreamy tunes in the manner of Chris Isaak.

ONLY CONNECT

Web Sightings

ASTRONOMY PICTURE OF THE DAY (http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/astropix. html)—If space is not, as Captains Kirk and Picard thought, the final frontier, then cyberspace may be. At NASA's Astronomy Picture of the Day, worlds collide (or, at least, interface) as "each day a different image or photograph of our fascinating universe is featured, along with a brief explanation written by a professional astronomer." This is not to say that amateurs need not apply: the astrophysicists and APOD creators Robert Nemiroff and Jerry Bonnell encourage their many visitors to submit photos, though generally not the kind you take while on vacation, unless you travel to other galaxies. July 4th's "Cat's Eye Nebula," for instance, was taken with the Hubble Space Telescope and offers the image of a dying star three thousand light-years away. (It suggested something last seen at the Fillmore, circa 1969, high above the Jefferson Airplane.)

As cool as the photos are (cybernauts voted APOD the NASA Cool Site of the Year for 1995, and the agency has plenty of jaw-dropping, eye-popping sites to choose from), the captions are positively consciousness-expanding. In the July 4th description, for example, you learn that the phrase "planetary nebula" is misleading (they're stars, not planets); hypertext links take you to additional APOD images of planetary nebulae (all photos are archived and indexed both chronologically and by subject), to helpful glossary entries, and even to a site devoted to "The Scale of the Universe Debate in 1996." Click around enough and you can see every photo that's been up (the site celebrated its first anniversary in June), from "Blasting Off from the Moon"—a fare-thee-well image of Apollo 16's lunar module, shot by a robot camera that was left behind—to "The United States at Night," a composite of more than two hundred images taken by orbiting satellites. From that altitude, the cities look like stars.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. July 26: **BOUKAN GINEN.** Dining.

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—July 24: **CHEAP TRICK.** This late-seventies Rockford, Illinois, quartet had the wherewithal to combine the punk spirit of the Ramones with the pop instinct of the Raspberries. The result was often less than the sum of its parts, but the band lived up to its name with enviable relish: they may have been the ultimate put-on, but they were a hell of a good time. Rick Nielsen has put away the ten-neck guitar, and the band recently turned up on TV covering "Cold Turkey," John Lennon's stark ode to withdrawal, but you can still expect the guys to break out an ample supply of hooks, licks, and smirks.

ART

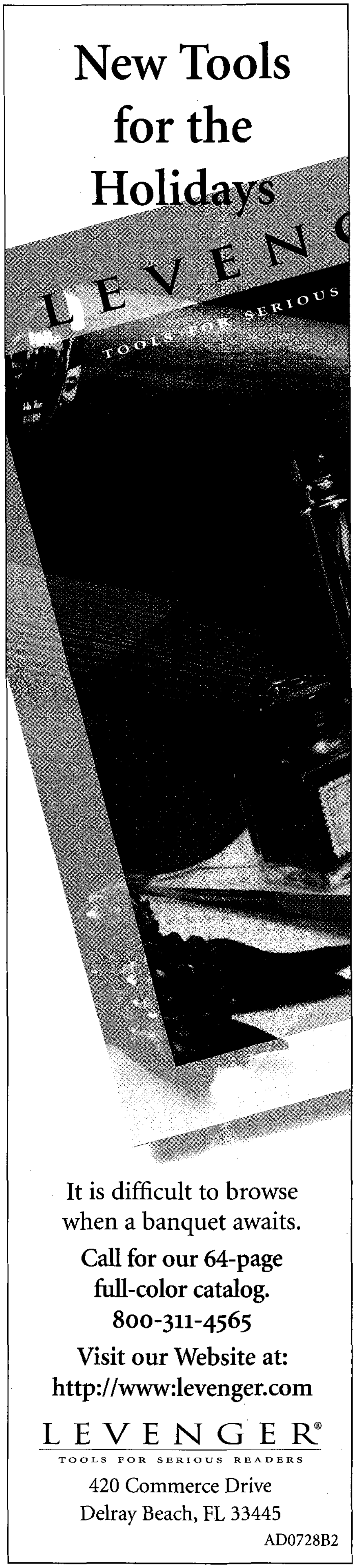
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

NEW YORK *TIMES* CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION—"Centennial" here refers to Adolph S. Ochs's purchase, in 1896, of the then forty-five-year-old paper. Four shows are up until the fall; see listings for the Museum of Modern Art, the American Museum of Natural History, the Morgan Library, and the New York Public Library.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Winslow Homer," a comprehensive survey of the painter's career, comprising nearly two hundred paintings, watercolors, and drawings. Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ "Toulouse-Lautrec." After the successes of its Rembrandt and Goya exhibitions, the museum now attempts to pull off another homegrown blockbuster with its Toulouse-Lautrec holdings. The result is highly entertaining, but it lacks the breadth and authority of its predecessors. The Met's collection consists almost entirely of Lautrec's graphic works on theatrical subjects, including many of the brilliantly designed posters and evocative lithographs that number among the artist's most important works. But the museum has only a handful of his paintings and drawings, and minor ones at that—a situation that creates a rather lopsided view of his career. Inevitably, there is a video gallery, which presents a *très gai* clip from Jean Renoir's film "French Cancan." Through Sept. 29. . . . ¶ "Ancient Art from the Shumei Family Collection." A grab bag of antiquities with no theme beyond excellence—and that's good enough. The Shumei Family is a spiritual organization with a strong aesthetic emphasis which is building a mountaintop museum in Japan designed by I. M. Pei. The objects on loan range from exquisitely wrought gold vessels from third-millenium-B.C. Persia to remarkably fresh Roman garden frescoes to exuberantly painted Islamic ceramics. According to the founder of the Shumei, "Unless you make others happy, you can never be happy yourself"; this exhibition should bring felicity to everyone connected with it. Through Sept. 1. . . . ¶ "Picturing Paradise: Colonial Photography of Samoa, 1875-1925." Portraits and landscapes in a variety of formats, including albums, postcards, stereographs, and photogravures. Through Aug. 4. . . . ¶ "Art of the Deccani Sultans." Through Aug. 25. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden is open (weather permitting), with sculptures by Rodin, Lachaise, Lipchitz, Caro, Smith (David), and Smith (Tony). (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"From Bauhaus to Pop: Masterworks Given by Philip Johnson." Through Sept. 3. . . . ¶ "Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation" includes a hundred and thirty paintings, and nearly as many works on paper, depicting lovers, wives, poets, art dealers, and children. Through Sept. 17. . . . ¶ "Pictures of the Times: A Century of Prints from the New York *Times*." Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ "Thinking Print: Books to Billboards, 1980-95," an ambitious and engaging show that covers a lot of ground in a thematically unified manner—linking the advent of new printmakers (e.g., Barbara Kruger, Félix González-Torres, Kiki Smith) with such recent trends as the resurgence of politically engaged art and of metaphors of the body. Through Sept. 10. (For the run of the Picasso show, the museum's hours are Saturdays through Mondays, 9:30 to 6; Tuesdays, 11 to 6; and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30. Timed-entry tickets to Picasso are available in the lobby and through Ticketmaster, at 307-4545.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Meret Oppenheim: Beyond the Teacup." The subtitle says it all. The furry teacup remains perhaps the most famous Surrealist object, but it represents only the tip of the Oppenheim iceberg. It's an early work, done in 1936; the artist continued to produce paintings and sculptures—some sublime, others, frankly, awful—until her death, in 1985. The teacup's little-known yet mag-



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nificent complement is "Fur Gloves with Wooden Fingers" (also from 1936); the jungle-red nails protruding from the coarse fur gloves have a wonderfully creepy lycanthropic quality. Some fifty years later, she produced its lyrical coda, "Pair of Gloves," in periwinkle suede overlaid with a delicate web of red veins. Through Oct. 9. . . . ¶ "Africa: The Art of a Continent." Through Sept. 29. . . . ¶ "In/Sight: African Photographers, 1940 to the Present." Through Sept. 22. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"NYNY: City of Ambition." The perfect summer show, an anthology of twentieth-century images of New York drawn mostly from the permanent collection, presented in an installation as bold, entertaining, and aggressive as the city itself. The emphasis is on photography, from the lavender majesty of Steichen's nocturnes to the gritty realism of Weegee, but some favorite paintings are dusted off as well: Georgia O'Keeffe, Edward Hopper, Charles Sheeler, and Joseph Stella are among those well represented. The architectural models of the Empire State Building (in carved plaster) and Rockefeller Center (in finely detailed wood) are fascinating—but why is a cocktail dress draped over Mies van der Rohe's model of the Seagram Building? Through Oct. 27. . . . ¶ "Perpetual Mirage: Photographic Narratives of the Desert West." A survey of books and prints stretching from Timothy O'Sullivan and Carleton Watkins in the nineteenth century to Robert Adams and Richard Misrach today. In between are contributions from Lewis Baltz, Edward S. Curtis, Joe Deal, Laura Gilpin, Mark Klett, Dorothea Lange, John Pfahl, Eliot Porter, Frederick Sommer, Robert Venturi, JoAnn Verburg, Edward Weston, and others. Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ "Paul Cadmus: The Sailor Trilogy." Through Sept. 1. . . . ¶ "An American Story," a chronological survey of twentieth-century paintings and sculptures, both well known and obscure, from the museum's collection. Through Oct. 6. . . . ¶ A stylized, gardenlike installation of video sculptures, by Shigeko Kubota. Through Aug. 25. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—An exhibition that explores the relationship between scientific research and its presentation in the media, specifically, the New York *Times*. Through Sept. 29. . . . ¶ The Hall of Vertebrate Origins has reopened, its dropped ceiling removed to reveal Calvert Vaux's skylit design. All the better to see the dunkleosteus, a sixteen-foot-long hanging model of an armored fish, based on the four-foot-long fossil of its head, with self-sharpening jawbones. . . . ¶ "Amber: Window to the Past." Through Sept. 2. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Converging Cultures: Art & Identity in Spanish America." An intelligently curated, wonderfully intriguing exhibition of Latin American art from the sixteenth century through the early twentieth, focussing on the interpenetrations of native and colonial cultures. Through Aug. 11. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

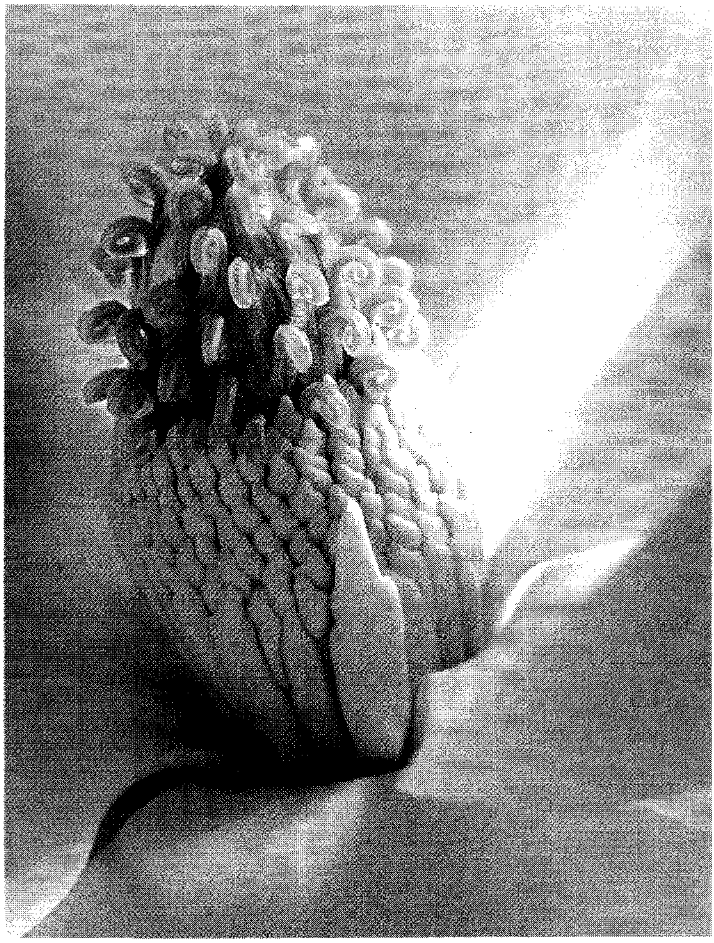
American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Breaking Barriers: Recent American Craft," a wide range of works by such artists as Jean Williams Cacicedo, Wendell Castle, Viola Frey, Albert Paley, and Jane Sauer. Through Oct. 13. . . . ¶ Patrick Dougherty's "Crossing Over," a large, vortexlike sculpture made from intertwined saplings and branches. Through Oct. 13. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Being William Morris: A Centenary Exhibition." Through Sept. 1. . . . ¶ "Documenting the Times: Adolph S. Ochs and the Early Years of the New York *Times*." Through Sept. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W.—"Metropolitan Lives: The Ashcan Artists and Their New York, 1897-1917," an exhibit of paintings and works on paper by Robert Henri, John Sloan, Everett Shinn, William Glackens, George Bellows, and George Luks. Through Aug. 4. . . . ¶ Photographs, prints, furniture, books, and other objects are on view in "Becoming Eleanor Roosevelt: The New York Years, 1884-1933." . . . ¶ Seven Louis Comfort Tiffany lamps are on display, along with a few other Tiffany objects, a Tiffany oil painting of the Palisades, and photographs of interiors he designed and of his workshops. Through Sept. 15. . . . ¶ "July 9, 1776: New York's Independence Day." A show of documents, paintings, guns, and other memorabilia chronicling the day on which New York, the only colony to have abstained from ratifying the Declaration of Independence five days earlier, finally committed itself to open rebellion. (Its fears were well founded: Washington lost New York in September, and the city was occupied by the British for the duration of the war.) Through Sept. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Headlines, Deadlines, Bylines: The New York *Times* Morgue, 1896-1996." Through Oct. 18. . . . ¶ Visitors to "The Global Library—http://www.nypl.org" can step up to one of fourteen computer stations and embark on a guided tour of the World Wide Web. (Or, if you prefer, you can visit the exhibit's Web site from home.) Also on view are a host of nonvirtual objects, such as Sumerian cuneiform tablets, Chinese woodblock prints, a Gutenberg Bible, and the 1727 "New England Primer." Through Aug. 17. . . . ¶ "The Hand of the Poet," a display of original manuscripts by masters from Donne to Eliot. Through July 31. (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City—Works from every period in the career of the Japanese-American sculptor (1904-88) are installed in a garden and in open-air galleries carved from, and added to, an old photo-engraving factory. While it's all of interest—early gold-plated brass works, cast-bronze models for unrealized playgrounds, Japanese paper lanterns adapted for electricity—stone is the core medium. Its names alone (jasper, serpentine, Languedoc marble, red Persian travertine) are sensuous, and the stone sculptures rise among the birches, ivy, brick, and steel of Queens like indigenous art—relics of a civilization. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6. Through Oct. 31.)



FLORA PHOTOGRAPHICA: *Imogen Cunningham brought an intoxicating freshness to her subjects, whether artists or cultivars from her garden, like the "Magnolia Blossom, Tower of Jewels," above. A selection of her botanical images from the twenties and thirties is on view at the cozy Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St., through Aug. 2.*

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Summer hours: unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Paul Cadmus—In this collection of recent drawings, mostly nude studies of his model and companion, Jon Anderson, the artist self-consciously attempts to reproduce the dramatic lighting and exquisite finish of Renaissance draftsmen such as Dürer. The drawings are sharply observed and pleasingly wrought, but they lack the bite and satirical whimsy of Cadmus's early work. At ninety-one, he may feel that he no longer needs to shock. Through Aug. 2. (DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. . . . ¶ The artist's "Sailor Trilogy" is on view at the Whitney Museum, through Sept. 1.)

Philip Pearlstein—The great technician is best known for his dead-on observation of flesh; this small exhibition, culled from a half-century of portraiture going back to a pair of fussy, affectionate canvases of the artist's parents, shows a lesser-known aspect of his talent. Most of the subjects are either artists or New-York-art-world biggies—Alex Katz, Irving Sandler, Raphael Soyer. The works are smart and brilliantly done, but everyone looks the same, as though the artist were painting plasticine statues. Scott Burton may have been right when he suggested, in his 1985 essay which accompanies the exhibit, that there's something revolutionary about portraits without psychological insight; nonetheless, it's strange, and a bit disappointing, to see people in Pearlsteins wearing clothes. Through July 31. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

"PEEP SHOW"—The most remarkable objects in this group exhibition on the theme of voyeurism are the sculptural animations by Gregory Barsamian: the technology is primitive—a three-dimensional version of the little books that children flip through—but the effect is transcendent, even spooky: they return the viewer to naïveté, to the magical era of the Punch and Judy show. There are some fine paintings and assemblages, too, notably Janice Gordon's urban fetishes, constructed from found objects, and Holly Lane's surrealistic vision of a Renaissance altarpiece, in a stylish hand-carved frame. Through Aug. 9. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

"RECAPTURED NATURE"—Paintings, sculptures, and photographs by gallery artists and guests, including Lothar Baumgarten, Dan Graham, Ellsworth Kelly, Anselm Kiefer, Richard Long, Gerhard Richter, and Jeff Wall. Through Sept. 7. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St.)

"WATER"—*Acqua, agua, eau,* H_2O: ocean waves by Vija Celmins, abstract swimmers by Judith Cotton, a sweeping vista of an African lake by April Gornik, and a sublime night seascape by Hiroshi Sugimoto. Through Aug. 30. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

GROUP SHOWS—At **BAUMGOLD,** 128 E. 72nd St.: Paintings, drawings, and sculptures by invited artists, among them Anton van Dalen, Claudia Fitch, Elliott Green, Vincent La Scala, Saul Steinberg, and Timothy Woodman. Through July 25. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **ROBERT MILLER,** 41 E. 57th St.: Offerings from gallery artists, including Louise Bourgeois, Juan Uslé, St. Clair Cemin, Eva Hesse, Alex Katz, David Hockney, and Alice Neel. Through July 31. . . . **PACE WILDENSTEIN,** 32 E. 57th St.: Sculptures and paintings by Donald Judd, Joel Shapiro, Barbara Hepworth, Elizabeth Murray, and Robert Mangold. Through Sept. 7. (Closes Fridays at 4.)

SHORT LIST—**LAURENT DE BRUNHOFF,** Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. Through Aug. 2. . . . **ELIZABETH CATLETT,** Caribbean Cultural Center, 408 W. 58th St. Through Aug. 16. . . . **LARRY POONS,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Through Aug. 30. . . . **HUNT SLONEM,** Stubbs Books & Prints, 153 E. 70th St. Through July 30.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

SIMON LEUNG—"Call to Glory. . . or Afternoon Tea with Marcel Duchamp," a mixed-medium installation addressing the potential for a homoerotic rereading of the plainly heterosexual Duchamp's final and possibly most enigmatic work, "Étant Donnés"; having publicly abandoned serious art-making for chess in 1923, he labored on this large-scale peephole installation secretly for the last two decades of his life. Through a vexingly elaborate and abstruse series of maneuvers, Leung attempts to liken the peepholes to gay glory holes. Though Duchamp has probably elicited more critical commentary than even Picasso, maybe it's time to give the grand old man a rest. Through July 26. (Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St.)

EDWARD RUSCHA—A retrospective of the California Pop Conceptualist's artist books of the sixties. Their procedures (serialism, enumeration, etc.) notwithstanding, they avoided the often prim or sour seriousness of other Conceptual art. (The most dramatic of the books, "Royal Road Test," documents Ruscha and a friend's defenestration of a Royal typewriter onto a California freeway.) "Every Building on the Sunset Strip," "Twentysix Gasoline Stations," "Various Small Fires and Milk," "Some Los Angeles Apartments"—these serenely deadpan titles belie a body of work that, despite its unassuming manner and humble materials, represents one of the lasting achievements of sixties art. Through Aug. 31. (Printed Matter, 77 Wooster St. Open Saturdays until 7.)

GROUP SHOWS—At **ARSTARK,** 568 Broadway: Paintings and works on paper by Will Berry, Holly Hughes, Wendy Miller, and Bob Penrose. Through Aug. 16. . . . **BONAKDAR,** 130 Prince St.: Sculptures, paintings, and photographs by Uta Barth, Mat Collishaw, Charles Long, and others. Through Sept. 7. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **GREENE NAFTALI,** 526 W. 26th St.: Sculptures, assemblages, paintings, and photographs by Thomas Baldwin, Julie Becker, Rachel Harrison, Josephine Meckseper, and Luke Murphy. Through Aug. 2. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **KASMIN,** 74 Grand St.: Crudely formed plaster-and-papier-mâché sculptures by Donald Baechler, akin to his childlike paintings; a little whitewashed house from Konstantin Kakanias, the interior lit by votive candles and painted with wild scenes of sexual license; and a small wood table supporting discarded airplane parts, by Nancy Rubins. Through Sept. 21. . . . **METRO PICTURES,** 150 Greene St.: Photographs, sculptures, and installations by Mike Kelley, Louise Lawler, Gary Simmons, Laurie Simmons, and Tony Oursler. Through July 31. (Closed Mondays.). . . . **MORRIS HEALY,** 530 W. 22nd St.: Drawings and other works by gallery artists which are either made directly on a wall, set into a wall, or, in the case of Tom Sachs, shot through a wall with a gun. Through Aug. 23. . . . **PACE WILDENSTEIN,** 142 Greene St.: Paintings and sculptures by George Condo, Jim Dine, Lucas Samaras, Julian Schnabel, and Kiki Smith. Through July 31. (Closes Fridays at 4.) . . . **HOLLY SOLOMON,** 172 Mercer St.: Paintings and drawings by Lower East Side artist Eric Drooker; "Watch," an interactive installation involving computer graphics and sound, by David Rokeby; and "Border Patrol," an interactive video installation by Rokeby's sometime collaborator Paul Garrin. Through Aug. 2. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **SPERONE WESTWATER,** 142 Greene St.: Paintings and sculptures by, among others, Alighiero e Boetti, Guillermo Kuitca, Bruce Nauman, Frank Moore, Nabil Nahas, and Not Vital. Through July 26.

SHORT LIST—**GREG BOGIN** and **GRAHAM DURWARD,** Boesky & Callery, 51 Greene St. Through Aug. 2. . . . **JOSEPH COPELAND,** Bridges and Bodell, 13 E. 7th St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 7; through July 31. . . . **JENE HIGHSTEIN,** Ace, 275 Hudson St. Opens at 1. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays; through Aug. 17. . . . **SHIGEKO KUBOTA,** Fung, 537 Broadway. Opens at noon; closed Mondays; through Aug. 2. . . . **SOL LE WITT** and **EL ANATSUI,** Skoto, 25 Prince St. Through July 27. . . . **KEITH TYSON,** Zwirner, 43 Greene St. Through July 26.

PHOTOGRAPHY

STEVEN BROCK—Black-and-white portraits and street scenes of fiesta-going villagers in Pomabamba, Peru. The pictures show worshippers and dancers en route to the festivities or returning home, and they highlight feelings of anticipation and satisfaction rather than revelry. The artist is superb at capturing the Andean light, but he sometimes gets lost in the gulf between documentary and artistic expression, producing sharp images with a vague point of view. That chasm is a rewarding region to explore, however, and a handful of pictures fuse the two sensibilities. In one radiant portrait of a patiently waiting little girl in a felt hat, earrings, a wool sweater, and an embroidered dress, Brock seems to epitomize the gentle dignity of the Incan people. Through Aug. 16. (Richardson, 560 Broadway.)

IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM (1883-1976)—"Flora," a selection of photographs of botanical specimens from the twenties and thirties. Through Aug. 2. (Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

GEORGE PLATT LYNES—Photographs from the thirties through the fifties, staged with flair, of the famous and the hunky: Paul Cadmus with an angelic Lillian Gish, her hair tangled in a thicket of tremendous meaning, lit in

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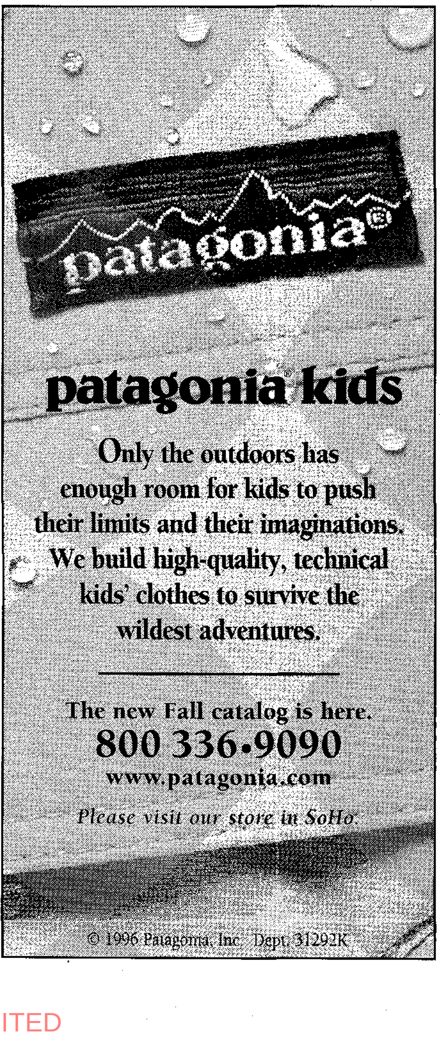

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the lurid style of Edgar G. Ulmer; Yul Brynner, with hair and without trousers; W. H. Auden, groping in a garbage can; and a bevy of forgotten boys, whose prettiness now induces melancholy, somehow. Through Aug. 2. (DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

"Dance in America"—A survey of the different styles and approaches of the dance photographers Lois Greenfield, Gjon Mili, and Barbara Morgan. Through Aug. 2. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

"Dearest Comrades"—Prints by the seven photographers whose work is included in the recently published "Whitman's Men: Walt Whitman's Calamus Poems"—Mark Beard, John Dugdale, Robert Flynt, Bill Jacobson, Russell Maynor, Steve Morrison, and Frank Yamrus. Through Aug. 9. (Wessel O'Connor, 60 Thomas St., between Church St. and West Broadway. Opens at noon.)

"Exposure"—Photographs and photo-based works by gallery artists, including Janine Antoni, Nobuyoshi Araki, Larry Clark, Gregory Crewdson, Gunther Förg, Jack Pierson, and Gerhard Richter. Through Aug. 2. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

"Games People Play"—A hundred years of images from the New York City Parks Department's photo archives: nineteenth-century croquet, latter-day hoops, a 1968 giant Tinkertoy fest, a 1934 fedoraed checkers match. Through Sept. 13. (Arsenal Gallery, Fifth Ave. at 64th St. Open weekdays 9 to 4:30.)

"The Insistent Image"—A clutch of well-known photographs (with a few anonymous pictures sprinkled in) by such blue-chip artists as Weston, Abbott, Watkins, Kertész, Cartier-Bresson, Steichen, and Lange. A smaller, more kinetic group of photographs from *Life* (by John Loengard, Mark Shaw, Elliott Erwitt, Robert Riger, and others) is in the back room. Through July 26. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

"Nude York"—Whaddaya think? Nudes by thirty-one photographers, among them Rebecca Blake, Colette, Sheila Metzner, Andres Serrano, Bert Stern, and Aoi Tsutsumi. Through Aug. 17. (Anthony, 589 Broadway. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6.)

"Two"—A diverse selection of photographs that feature pairs of things—people, objects, a man and his shadow. The artists include Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Eugène Atget, Evelyn Hofer, Koichiro Kurita, August Sander, Jill Seymour, and Edward Weston. Through Aug. 23. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Closed Mondays.)

Group Shows—At **borden,** 560 Broadway: Photographs by gallery artists, among them Lewis Baltz, Tina Barney, Jan Groover, Frank Majore, and Sandy Skoglund. Through July 31. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **gladstone,** 99 Greene St.: Works by Richard Prince, Sarah Lucas, and Georgina Starr. Through July 31. . . . **gorney,** 100 Greene St.: Photographs by gallery artists Barbara Bloom, Sarah Charlesworth, David Deutsch, Martin Kersels, Catherine Opie, and James Welling, among others. Through July 31. (Closed Mondays.)

Short List—**anthony barboza,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. Through Aug. 16. . . . **lynn butler,** Leica, 670 Broadway. Opens Saturdays at noon; through July 31. . . . **bruce cratsley,** A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. Open daily, 10 to midnight; through July 30. . . . **ralph gibson,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway. Through July 26. . . . **gustav klutsis,** Schickler, 52 E. 76th St. Through Aug. 16. . . . **jonas mekas,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Closed Mondays; through Aug. 16. . . . **pedro meyer,** Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays; through Aug. 17. . . . **frederic ohringer,** Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Through Aug. 9. . . . **david turnley** and **peter turnley,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through Sept. 8. . . . **bing wright / jenny saville and glen luchford,** Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. Closes at 4 on Fridays; through Aug. 30.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL

(For information about tickets to all festival events, call 875-5030.)

"Brain Opera"—A forty-five-minute interactive work by Tod Machover which makes ample use of digital technology. (Marble Lobby, Juilliard School, 155 W. 65th St. July 24-30, beginning every hour on the hour from 1 to 7. Free tickets can be obtained at the box office of Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theatre from 10 to 1 on the days of the performances.)

Reigakusha—A Japanese ensemble specializing in gagaku (a form of traditional court music) participates in four events this week. July 25 at 6: A lecture-demonstration on the evolution of gagaku. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St.) . . . ¶ July 26 at 8: Traditional and contemporary Japanese works. (Alice Tully Hall.) . . . ¶ July 27 at 5: A symposium on gagaku. (Ethical Culture Society.) . . . ¶ July 28 at 8: The ensemble presents traditional Japanese works with bugaku dance, as well as contemporary compositions by Maki Ishii, Takemitsu, and Lois V Vierk. (Alice Tully Hall.)

LISTENING BOOTH

Beethoven's Byways—Listeners who want to pursue Beethoven's "Leonore" beyond its Lincoln Center Festival performances can turn to Herbert Blomstedt's 1976 Dresden Staatskapelle recording (newly reissued on the Berlin Classics label), in which Edda Moser commands the title role and Richard Cassily lets his vibrato range wide in the role of her father. Berlin Classics' "Der Unbekannte Beethoven" ("The Unknown Beethoven") is pretty much that, including in its lineup a handful of opera and singspiel arias and several dozen minuets, ländler, and contredanses that should prove essential to Beethoven groupies. Arkadia/Akademia's issue of the complete "Egmont" music, though marred by the vagaries of a mediocre orchestra captured in a live performance, concludes with four terrifically obscure incidental arias and duets (with stylish input from the Peruvian tenor Ernesto Palacio, who seems to surface rarely these days).

Karl Anton Rickenbacher conducts Berlin's Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester and -Chor in a pair of thoroughly recommendable releases on Koch/Schwann. One is dedicated to the youthful composer's very beautiful imperial cantatas marking the death of Joseph II and the elevation of Leopold II. The other disk offers rarely heard works for chorus and orchestra (including two versions of the serene "Opferlied"), as well as several marches for military band and the incidental music to "Leonore Prohaska" (including a melodrama for narrator and glass harmonica). Even lesser Beethoven can be mighty fine.

Kirov Orchestra and Chorus—At Avery Fisher Hall, Valery Gergiev conducting. July 25 at 8: Berlioz was fascinated by the plays of Shakespeare. He fell desperately in love with—and married, to his eventual chagrin—an Irish actress whose portrayal of Juliet he adored. He composed his "Roméo et Juliette" in 1839, after the marriage had fizzled, and called it a dramatic symphony, which is as good a label as any for a work that falls into the cracks that separate symphony, cantata, and opera. Wagner was initially taken by the piece but later described it as "piles of rubbish heaped up among the most brilliant inventions." The soloists in this performance are Olga Borodina (mezzo-soprano), Nikolai Gassiev (tenor), and Sergei Alexashin (bass-baritone). . . . ¶ July 26 at 8: Mr. Gergiev leads the Kirov forces in an all-Stravinsky program that comprises a concert version of the 1914 opera "The Nightingale" and the complete score of "The Firebird."

Eos Ensemble—July 25 at 8: Soloists assist the group (directed by Jonathan Sheffer) in works by Tod Machover for computer-enhanced instruments. (Alice Tully Hall.) . . . ¶ July 28 at 5: A program of music that Merce Cunningham used in dance settings, including works by Cage, Feldman, and Harrison. (Ethical Culture Society.) . . . **note:** A different program of Cunningham-related works (by David Behrman, Takehisa Kosugi, and David Tudor) will be presented by other musicians at the Ethical Culture Society on July 26 at 8.

Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and Monteverdi Choir—Music lovers first grew to appreciate John Eliot Gardiner, in the nineteen-seventies, as a conductor of Baroque music, which continues to occupy a central niche among his enthusiasms. But he has long been involved in later music, too. From 1983 to 1989 he was the Opéra de Lyon's music director, in which capacity he led standard operas as well as works on the fringe. Mozart occupied him in the early nineties, and now much of his energy is focussed on historically informed performances of nineteenth-century music with this sixty-five-member orchestra. July 27 at 8: In its United States début, the orchestra and chorus (which Mr. Gardiner founded in 1964) perform Beethoven's "Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage" (a setting of two poems by Goethe) and his Symphony No. 9. The soloists are soprano Luba Orgonasova, mezzo-soprano Anne-Sofie von Otter, tenor Michael Schade, and bass Franz Hawlata. (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ July 28 at 8: Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis," with Ms. Orgonasova, Ms. von Otter, Mr. Schade, and bass Alastair Miles. (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ Opera was Beethoven's bête noire: he wrestled unsuccessfully with the medium several times (one abortive attempt was a setting of Shakespeare's "Macbeth"), and the one opera he did complete—"Fidelio"—went through several radical overhauls before he was satisfied. The standard "Fidelio" will be presented in a concert version by the New York Philharmonic, on July 31, Aug. 2, and Aug. 4 at Avery Fisher Hall. And Mr. Gardiner's forces will present the opera as Beethoven first unveiled it, in 1805, under the title "Leonore," on July 30 and Aug. 1 at 8. Whether the composer's later emendations improved the score is open to debate; Mr. Gardiner (among others) has argued persuasively in favor of the original setting. Listeners may take this opportunity to hear Beethoven's first and last versions back to back and make up their own minds. The cast in this concert performance features soprano Hillevi Martinpelto in the title role and tenor Kim Begley as her imprisoned husband. (Alice Tully Hall.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—The group presents works by seven composers from the Far East, including Somei Satoh and Tan Dun. (Alice Tully Hall. July 27 at 8.)

OTHER PERFORMANCES IN TOWN

New York Philharmonic—In the last of this summer's free Parks Concerts, Richard Westerfield conducts Berlioz's "Benvenuto Cellini" Overture and Sibelius's Symphony No. 5; Chanticleer, the men's vocal ensemble, performs a-cappella works (by Andrea Gabrieli, Kurt Weill, and others) in addition to selections with the orchestra. (Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx. July 24 at 8. . . . ¶ Heckscher State Park, Suffolk County. July 27 at 8. For rain-date information, call 875-5709.)

Wednesdays in the Garden—An outdoor series at the Church of the Holy Trinity continues with chamber music by Schubert, Handel, and Debussy. (316 E. 88th St. July 24 at 7:30. No tickets necessary. In case of rain, the proceedings move inside to the parish hall.)

Bargemusic—July 25 at 7:30 and July 28 at 4: Cellist Ronald Thomas and pianist Randall Hodgkinson perform Bach's G-Major Viola da Gamba Sonata; violinist Nai-Yuan Hu joins them for Mozart's B-Flat Major Piano Trio

(K. 502); and violist Cynthia Phelps completes the ensemble for Martinů's rarely played Piano Quartet (written in 1942).... ¶ July 26 at 7:30: The five wind players of the Hexagon ensemble perform quintets by Ibert, Carter, Barber, Milhaud, and Hindemith. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061.)

Rossini Redux—Rossini's "L'Italiana in Algeri" must have turned right where she should have turned left. In this production by Operaspectives—updated, abridged, translated into English, and retitled "The Italian Girl . . . in Astoria?"—she shows up in Queens, where the owner of a night club on Thirtieth Avenue makes the mistake of trying to lure her into his service with the promise of a green card. (Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church, 237 E. 62nd St. July 26-27 at 7:30. For ticket information, call 1-718 278-1369.)

Summergarden—Baritone James Martin and pianist Joel Sachs perform art songs and cabaret classics from twentieth-century Paris, by Poulenc, Fauré, Satie, and many others. (Sculpture Garden, Museum of Modern Art, 14 W. 54th St. July 26-27 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

City Island Baroque Ensemble—Violist Rebecca Young and flutist Mindy Kaufman are featured in concertos by Telemann and C. P. E. Bach. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. July 28 at noon.)

Countertenor Alert—Two male altos have scheduled recitals in town this week. July 28 at 5: Jeffrey Gall is featured in solo cantatas by Buxtehude, Telemann, Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel, and Handel, assisted by period-instrument players from the Aston Magna academy, in Massachusetts. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. For information about tickets, call 1-800 875-7156.) . . . ¶ July 30 at 8: Jeffrey Dooley, with harpsichordist Kathryn Cok, performing songs and motets by Purcell, Monteverdi, Handel, and others. (St. John's in the Village, 218 W. 11th St., at Waverly Pl. Admission by contribution.)

Piano Trios—Violinist Lara St. John, cellist Iris Regev, and pianist Ilan Rechtman offer Beethoven's Trio in E-Flat Major (Op. 70, No. 1) and several of Mr. Rechtman's "Jazzicals." (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. July 28 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Jorge Avila—Violinist, assisted by pianist Ilan Rechtman, in Beethoven's Violin Sonata No. 3 and short works by Kreisler. (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. July 29 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Hangin' with the monsters, at the New York Hall of Science, in Queens.

JESSIE HARTLAND

OUT OF TOWN

Caramoor—July 26 at 8: Pianist Grant Johannesen, mezzo-soprano Katherine Ciesinski, and the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble collaborate on a program of works by Schumann, Ravel (his "Chansons Madécasses"), Debussy, and Fauré (his C-Minor Piano Quartet). . . . ¶ July 27 at 8:30: Peter Oundjian conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's in an all-Beethoven program: the "Egmont" Overture, Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Richard Goode), and Symphony No. 7. . . . ¶ July 28 at 5:30: Misha and Cipa Dichter perform piano duets by Schumann (his "Six Études in Canon Form," as arranged by Debussy), Brahms (his F-Minor Sonata, Op. 34b, which later evolved into his celebrated Piano Quintet), Shostakovich, Dvořák, and Arensky. (Katonah, N.Y. 1-914 232-1252.)

Glimmerglass Opera—July 26 at 8: Mozart's "La Finta Giardiniera." . . . ¶ July 27 at 8 and July 30 at 2: "Lizzie Borden," by Jack Beeson. . . . ¶ July 28 at 2: "La Calisto," an Ovid-based opera composed in 1651 by Francesco Cavalli and here presented in a new edition by Jane Glover, who will conduct. . . . ¶ July 29 at 2: "Don Pasquale." (Cooperstown, N.Y. 1-607 547-2255.)

Tanglewood—July 26 at 8:30: Seiji Ozawa conducts the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Ellington's "Harlem," Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" (with Marcus Roberts), and Dvořák's Symphony No. 9 ("From the New World"). . . . ¶ July 27 at 8:30: The Kirov Orchestra and Chorus perform Rachmaninoff's "The Bells," in a program that also includes Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6. Valery Gergiev conducts. . . . ¶ July 28 at 2:30: Hugh Wolff leads the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Bernard Rands's "Le Tambourin" Suite No. 2, Sibelius's Violin Concerto (with Itzhak Perlman), and Brahms's Serenade No. 1. . . . ¶ July 28 and July 30 at 8: Britten's opera "Peter Grimes," which received its American première at Tanglewood fifty years ago, is here presented in a staged production conducted by Seiji Ozawa and performed by singers and instrumentalists studying at Tanglewood this summer. (Lenox, Mass. 1-413 637-5165.)

Maverick Concerts—The Miami String Quartet presents the première of Robert Starer's Quartet No. 3 (the second work in the genre he has written on commission from Maverick Concerts). Also on the program are quartets by Mozart, Haydn, and Eduardo Diaz-muñoz (a Mexico City native whose work has recently been championed by the Miami foursome). (Woodstock, N.Y. 1-914 679-8217. July 28 at 3.)

Music Mountain—The St. Lawrence String Quartet plays Haydn's D-Major Quartet (Op. 76, No. 5) and Dvořák's A-Major Piano Quintet (with Leonard Hokanson assisting), in addition to the Third Quartet by the Canadian composer and aesthetic philosopher R. Murray Schafer. (Falls Village, Conn. For information, call 1-860 824-7126. July 28 at 3.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Mirror, Mirror, in the Hall—At the recently expanded New York Hall of Science, the quest for knowledge is a full-bodied affair. You can fling yourself (or a friend, for that matter) against a wall in the Realm of the Atom exhibit; as you step away, your shadow remains there, frozen. (Something to do with atoms absorbing light.) In the darkness of the Singing Shadows room, your movements trigger an electronic symphony. A quick once-over in the funhouse-style Antigravity mirror lets you contemplate your extra heads. Should you weary of that, you can dial different moods in the Vocal Variety phone booth: press the Sad Mickey button, for instance, and whatever you say comes back laden with sighs and trailing off in despair. Or perhaps you're more of a pure-science type: you want bugs, say, new bugs every week. How lucky you are: the Backyard Monsters exhibit features mealworms this weekend, to be followed in coming weeks by giant Madagascar hissing cockroaches, Monarch butterflies, tarantulas, and black-widow spiders. (47-01 111th St., Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, Queens. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5, and—until Labor Day—Mondays and Tuesdays, 10 to 2. For more information, call 1-718 699-0005.)

Ursa Major, Ursa Minor—Those who missed the chance to run with the bulls in Pamplona might consider sleeping with the bears on Staten Island. At the Zoological Society's semiannual slumber party, kids between the ages of seven and eleven (and their accompanying adults) can handle king snakes, pythons, and millipedes, then help fix the bear cubs' evening meal (fresh fruit mashed with monkey chow and ladled into baby bottles). In recent years, Lorraine Austin, the zoo's director of education, has arranged for midnight strolls. "Usually we tell creepy stories and get zoo personnel to jump out from behind trees," she says. "And there's a lot of talk about vampires once we get near the bat cave." The group sleeps en masse in a big open room—at least, most of it does. "One year, a bunch of mothers stayed up the whole night playing cards and carrying on," Austin says with a sigh. "They said it was their big night out." (614 Broadway, Staten Island. July 26 at 7:30 P.M. to July 27 at 9 A.M. For information about registering, call 1-718 442-3101.)

Midsummer Night Swing—Alfresco dancing continues on the Plaza at Lincoln Center. The partnering starts at 8:15, Wednesdays through Saturdays, through August 10. To help you find your footing, there are dance lessons Wednesdays through Fridays at 6:30. July 24: Brave Combo and Los Macondos mix polkas, horas, tangos, and foxtrots. A crew of pastry chefs offer international flavors of their own, with a tasting of desserts from Italy, Austria, France, India, Greece, New England, and the Middle East. . . . ¶ July 25: Roomful of Blues plays West Coast swing. . . . ¶ July 26: La Bottine Souriante imports a selection of French Canadian quadrilles. . . . ¶ July 27: Cherish the Ladies and Kips Bay Ceili Band pump out jigs, reels, and Irish waltzes. (Tickets available at the entrance.)

Readings—July 24 at 7: David Sedaris and Dale Peck read from works in progress. (KGB, 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ July 25 at 8:30: Novelist Richard Hell reads from "Go Now," and Jim Carroll reads from "Fear of Dreaming," his collected poetry. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ July 28 at 3: A marathon reading from the collection "In Defense of Mumia" (Abu-Jamal, the former Black Panther who is currently on death row in Pennsylvania), with Tracie Morris, Saul Williams, Michael C. Ladd, Zoë Anglesey, and Kevin Powell, among others. (Brooklyn Moon Café, 745 Fulton St., Brooklyn. No tickets necessary.)

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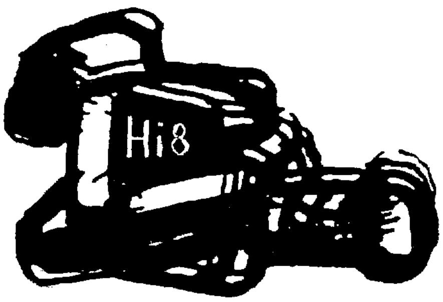
THE MOVIES



FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

The Adventures of Pinocchio—The wood-carver's progeny's tale, directed by Steve Barron. With Martin Landau as Geppetto and Jonathan Taylor Thomas supplying the voice of the puppet. Opening July 26. (84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

Joe's Apartment—A comedy combining computerized special effects and live action, about a young New Yorker (Jerry O'Connell) and roaches. Written and directed by John Payson. Opening July 26. (New York Twin, Orpheum VII, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

Johnny Shortwave—In fin-de-siècle America, an outlaw radio d.j. (Emmanuel Mark) leads the revolutionary charge against a fascist regime, in a film directed by Michael Bockner, who co-wrote the screenplay with Peter Boboras. Opening July 24. (Film Forum.)

Kingpin—Woody Harrelson, Bill Murray, and Randy Quaid star in Peter and Bobby Farrelly's bowling comedy. Written by Barry Fanaro and Mort Nathan. Opening July 26. (Criterion Center, 86th Street East Twin, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Waverly.)

Manny & Lo—A young orphan (Scarlett Johansson) and her teen-age sister (Aleksa Palladino) hit the road and enter a life of crime, in a comedy written and directed by Lisa Krueger. With Mary Kay Place. Opening July 26. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Pompatus of Love—In Richard Schenkman's romantic comedy, four friends (Jon Cryer, Tim Guinee, Adam Oliensis, and Adrian Pasdar) examine relationships and rock lyrics. Written by Cryer, Oliensis, and Schenkman. Opening July 26. (Cinema 3rd Avenue and Village East Cinemas.)

Stonewall—Reviewed below in Current Films. Opening July 26.

Supercop—A Hong Kong cop (Jackie Chan) goes undercover to break up a drug-and-arms ring. Directed by Stanley Tong. Opening July 26. (Embassy 2, Embassy 3, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Village Theatre VII.)

A Time to Kill—Joel Schumacher's adaptation of John Grisham's 1989 novel, starring Samuel L. Jackson, Matthew McConaughey, and Sandra Bullock. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening July 24. (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and James Wolcott. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 20.)

Bye-Bye—Writer-director Karim Dridi's drama about two French brothers of North African origin (Sami Bouajila and Ouassini Embarek) living with relatives in Marseilles. In French. (Quad Cinema.)

Celestial Clockwork—An aspiring soprano (Ariadna Gil) leaves Venezuela to live in Paris, in a comedy directed by Fina Torres. In French. (Carnegie Hall Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

Courage Under Fire—The lofty-sounding title is misleading. Edward Zwick's film doesn't tell us much about the nature of heroism: the only issue in this very sober and correct military drama is a narrow one—whether the medevac pilot Karen Walden (Meg Ryan), killed in action in the Gulf War, should be awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor. Denzel Washington, as the officer in charge of the investigation, has to sort out wildly divergent accounts of her behavior, dramatized in "Rashomon"-like flashbacks. Washington's thoughtful, delicately shaded performance holds the viewer's interest for a while—or, at least, serves as a distraction from the fundamental monotony of the "Is she or isn't she?" mystery. He can't win this battle single-handed, though; the material's relentless lack of consequence finally overpowers him, too. The movie isn't a disgrace, but it doesn't deserve any medals. Also with Lou Diamond Phillips, Michael Moriarty, Matt Damon, and Scott Glenn. Screenplay by Patrick Sheane Duncan.—T.R. (Baronet, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Waverly.)

Eraser—Arnold Schwarzenegger stars as a marshal with the Federal Witness-Protection Program whose mission is to protect a woman (Vanessa Williams) who knows something she shouldn't about illegal arms sales. As directed by Charles Russell, the movie is about as visually undistinguished as a major feature can be. The plot is scarcely more sophisticated; it tumbles along with a kind of parodic glee, like a greatest-hits compilation from every thriller of the past few years. With James Coburn and James Caan, one of whom is the villain.—A.L. (7/8/96) (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Olympia, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

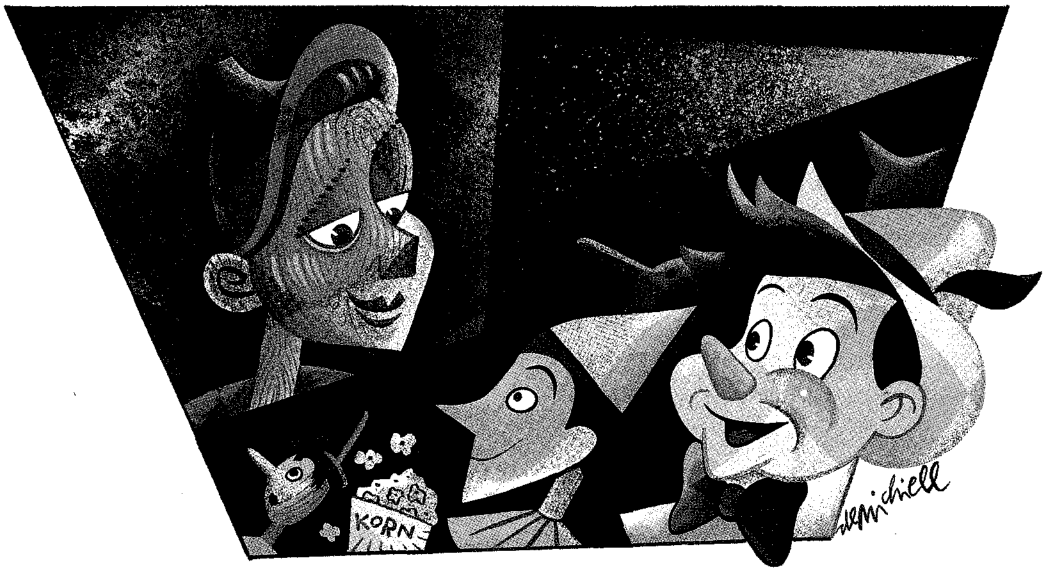
Fled—A thriller starring Laurence Fishburne and Stephen Baldwin as convicts on the run. Written by Preston A. Whitmore II; directed by Kevin Hooks. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Frighteners—Peter Jackson's dark comedy about a ghost-infested small town, starring Michael J. Fox, Trini Alvarado, and Peter Dobson. Written by the director and Fran Walsh. (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Metro Cinema, National Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and 34th Street Showplace.)

Heavy—The hero of writer-director James Mangold's low-budget independent film is a fat, balding, terribly shy man named Victor (Pruitt Taylor Vince), who makes pizzas at an upstate New York roadhouse owned by his mother (Shelley Winters). Mangold's images have a restrained, laconic lyricism that captures both the romantic lushness and the gray loneliness of the setting. This is a little-people movie that's modest in the right way: it's less interested in striking attitudes toward its disappointed characters than in simply observing the texture of life in their particular nowhere. Also with Liv Tyler, Deborah Harry, and Evan Dando.—T.R. (6/17/96) (Film Forum.)

The Hunchback of Notre Dame—In Disney's new animated offering, directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, it's hard to open your heart to Quasimodo (voiced by Tom Hulce), whose misfortune is not so much the malformation of his body as the hideously cute grin that mars his face. Esmeralda's lines are spoken by Demi Moore; a two-dimensional Moore is arguably more animated than the standard three-dimensional model, but the character is still too glutinous to be much fun. The heartwarming mush proves no competition for the murkier details; what gives the film some depth, and makes it a weird choice for a family outing, is Frollo (spoken by Tony Jay), the cathedral bigwig who not only has the hots for Esmeralda but insists on singing about them at great length.—A.L. (7/8/96) (86th Street East Twin, Lincoln Square, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Village Theatre VII. . . . ¶ Cinema 3rd Avenue and Embassy 3; through July 25.)

Independence Day—More than just a big summer alien-invasion movie, the latest (unacknowledged) remake of H. G. Wells's novel "The War of the Worlds" is a pseudo event in which the audience prides itself on being part of the hype. The German director Roland Emmerich pictures America through the lens of an awestruck tourist (instead of incapacitating hydroelectric dams or utility plants, the alien armada targets the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, the White House), delivering the populist message that the land of the free is still a scrappy, defiant, can-do country. Bill Pullman plays the Clintonesque President; Jeff Goldblum, reprising his geek elegance from "The Fly" and "Jurassic Park," has the role of a cable-television technician turned scientific savior; Will Smith is a Marine fighter pilot who captures the first alien with a punch to the head. The movie has third-act problems: the pace drags, and the dogfights become a confusing swarm of gnats. At the end, millions are dead, entire cities are destroyed, nuclear detonations have released radioactive fallout—and the battered survivors stand around grinning as if they've just won a volleyball game. This shallowness is scarier than anything in the movie. The film gives the audience what it craves: spectacular nothing.—J.W. (7/15/96) (Chelsea Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 34th St. East, Village East Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)



Opening July 26, Steve Barron's "The Adventures of Pinocchio."

ROBERT DEMICHIELL

Kazaam—Basketball star Shaquille O'Neal plays a genie, in Paul M. Glaser's comedy about a twelve-year-old boy (Francis Capra) growing up in the inner city. (86th Street East Twin, Embassy 1, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

Lone Star—The setting is Frontera, a small Texas town on the Mexican border, once policed by Sheriff Buddy Deeds (Matthew McConaughey) and now overseen by his son, Sam (Chris Cooper). The writer-director, John Sayles, shifts between the two eras with gracious ease, linking them with an old crime—the unsolved and unmourned killing of Buddy's predecessor, Charley Wade (Kris Kristofferson), who held sway through bigotry and corruption. Thanks to Kristofferson's scary and unyielding performance, the murder mystery becomes the core of the film. Elsewhere you can sense the strain as Sayles works away at the generation gaps, but by the end you're grateful for the movie's weight and substance—rare virtues in a flimsy summer.—A.L. (7/8/96) (Angelika Film Center, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 68th St. Playhouse.)

Maybe . . . Maybe Not—Absolutely not. Sönke Wortmann's comedy about a philanderer named Axel (Til Schweiger) who gets kicked out by his girlfriend and ends up crashing with a gay man (Joachim Krol) combines Neil Simon's corniest plotting and Billy Wilder's cheapest cynicism, without either one's gift for a gag. In German.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Multiplicity—Michael Keaton gets cloned and cloned again, in a comedy directed by Harold Ramis. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Criterion Center, Gemini, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Nutty Professor—Eddie Murphy brings some freshness to this new twist on the old Jerry Lewis comedy, starring as both Klump, a science teacher of vast proportions and surprising sweetness, and as Buddy Love, the chattering womanizer into whom Klump is transformed by a gene-restructuring potion. The war between gentleness and mania lends muscle to what is, for the most part, an exuberant gross-out; the gags start at "Animal House" level and work downward, and the director, Tom Shadyac, doesn't so much pace the film as try to keep up with the unstoppable riffs of his star. The makeup and special effects are a blast.—A.L. (7/8/96) (Art Greenwich Twin, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, National Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and 34th Street Showplace.)

Phenomenon—John Travolta plays George Malley, a regular-guy auto mechanic in rural California who looks up into the sky on his thirty-seventh birthday and is embraced by an intense light. Suddenly he's a genius, decoding secret Air Force messages, turning pig manure into fuel, and slowly, persistently winning the heart of Lace, a reclusive single mother (Kyra Sedgwick). Until the dénouement—a tearjerking piece of hagiography—it's surprisingly enjoyable, and Travolta's performance, a tour de force of clarity, conviction, economy of effort, and focussed will, is pretty close to genius. Jon Turtletaub ("While You Were Sleeping") directed.—S.K. (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, 84th Street Sixplex, Guild, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)

Stealing Beauty—Bernardo Bertolucci's new picture is set in the Tuscan countryside outside Siena, which the director rescues from lingering prettiness with some startling, impatient editing. Liv Tyler plays the teen-age heroine, Lucy, who comes to a villa full of languid expatriates—among them a sculptor (Donal McCann) and a dying playwright (Jeremy Irons)—where she will lose her virginity and find out who her real father is. Neither of these events is surprising, let alone gripping, and the film slowly dwindles into a record of the rich at play—poolside Henry James. The screenplay, brittle and precious, is by Bertolucci and Susan Minot.—A.L. (6/10/96) (Angelika Film Center, Beekman, and Lincoln Square.)

Stonewall—This semi-fictional account of the events that led to the epochal gay-liberation riot outside the Stonewall Inn in 1969 focusses on the bar's patrons—mostly drag queens—and the police harassment they withstood, and in particular on a diva (touchingly played by Guillermo Diaz) and her love affair with a handsome, straight-acting boy. It's entertainingly shallow. Although the storytelling is far from convincing (the characters tend to behave in an enlightened, p.c. fashion), the movie's core is fantasy—part wish fulfillment, part empowerment politics. The fond remembrances cloud the issues; the film's true heart is in its soap-opera subplots, which bubble harmlessly along. Directed by Nigel Finch.—B.D. (Quad Cinema and 62nd & Broadway; starting July 26.)

Trainspotting—The writer John Hodge and the director Danny Boyle worked together on "Shallow Grave"; their latest collaboration, based on Irvine Welch's novel, is a very different affair—faster, more furious, and far more intrigued by the frailties of the flesh. Why should people looking for a good time see a film about skinny, cynical heroin addicts in Edinburgh? Because the junkies themselves are having such a good time (apart from the instances when they almost die, that is) that what sounds grungy and depressing turns out to be weirdly uplifting. The performances—especially those of Ewan McGregor, in the leading role, and Robert Carlyle, as a terrifying hard man named Begbie—feel driven and unashamed, and Boyle's fidgety, try-anything style is horribly infectious; though the film sells you short on plot, it makes you ravenous for the next visual fix. But it's relentlessly proud of its pace and attack, and in the end this approach becomes exhausting: you may yield to the film's verve while still praying that it will all be over soon.—A.L. (7/22/96) (Angelika Film Center, Cinema II, Lincoln Square, and 19th Street East 6. . . . ¶ East 85th Street; starting July 26.)

Walking and Talking—In Nicole Holofcener's fresh and accomplished début comedy, Catherine Keener plays Amelia, a thirtyish New Yorker who thinks she's ready to quit therapy because it's been a few months since she was obsessed with a man; Anne Heche is her best friend, Laura, whose announcement that she's about to marry sends Amelia into a panic. Cinematically speaking, the movie is somewhat tame, but Holofcener's writing is trenchant and often hilarious, and the actors are fine, especially Keener, who has the tragic eyes, huge, hopeful smile, and beautifully awkward timing of a classic clown. It's nice, too, to see a movie about female friendship that doesn't stoop: at no point do the two women catfight over fame, money, or a man. With Liev Schreiber as Amelia's sometime boyfriend, Todd Field as Laura's fiancé, and Kevin Corrigan—another brilliant clown—in the poignant-repulsive role of Bill, the geeky video-store clerk Amelia turns to for comfort.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

ALSO PLAYING

ANGELS & INSECTS (reviewed in our issue of 1/29/96): Angelika 57. . . . **ANTONIA'S LINE:** Cinema 3. . . . **THE ARRIVAL:** Manhattan Twin. . . . **THE BIRDCAGE** (3/18/96): Manhattan Twin and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . COLD COMFORT FARM (5/13/96): Quad Cinema and Regency. . . . DRAGONHEART: Worldwide Cinemas. . . . FLIRTING WITH DISASTER (4/15/96): Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . HARRIET THE SPY: East 85th Street, Embassy 4, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, and Waverly. . . . JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH (4/22/96): Manhattan Twin. . . . JANE EYRE: 59th Street East Cinema. . . . MIGHTY APHRODITE (10/30/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE (6/3/96): Astor Plaza and Village Theatre VII. . . . A PERFECT CANDIDATE: Angelika 57. . . . PRIMAL FEAR: Worldwide Cinemas. . . . PURPLE NOON: Paris. . . . THE ROCK (6/17/96): 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 2, Embassy 4, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas. . . . STRIPTEASE: Criterion Center and Gemini. . . . A THIN LINE BETWEEN LOVE AND HATE: Worldwide Cinemas. . . . THE TRUTH ABOUT CATS AND DOGS: Worldwide Cinemas. . . . TWISTER (5/20/96): Criterion Center and Gemini. . . . WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE (5/27/96): Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Square.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Baronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy I, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gemini, Second Ave. at 64th St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Manhattan Twin, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Metro Cinema I and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
68th St. Playhouse, Third Ave. at 68th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton I and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly I and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

Anthony Adverse (1936)—Fredric March takes part in the Napoleonic Wars, as well as in the slave trade, and along the way he misplaces his wife, Olivia de Havilland. When he finds her, it turns out that she has been even busier than he; she has managed to become a great opera star and a famous shady lady. Which might have been an entertaining plot development if the director hadn't been humorless Mervyn LeRoy, drudging away. Claude Rains plays a haughty, gout-ridden marquis, and Gale Sondergaard, whose leer was her fortune, is the superwicked villainess.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; July 28.)

A Fistful of Dollars (1964)—In a poncho that never gets in the way of his gun, the Man with No Name (Clint Eastwood) rides into a Mexican border town and, like the rogue samurai in Kurosawa's "Yojimbo," accelerates the carnage between two heinous clans until the place is free and pure—and empty. While Sergio Leone's landmark spaghetti Western follows the plot and even the camera setups of Kurosawa's classic black comedy (which already owed a debt to Dashiell Hammett's "Red Harvest"), it has an attitude and style all its own—a mixture of bravado and verismo. Leone, in his directorial breakthrough (he's credited as "Bob Robertson"), did little more than suggest the eccentric mastery of rhythm and scale which would flower in his "Once Upon a Time" movies. But he always had a brilliant big-screen eye, and he knew how to spotlight that natural minimalist Eastwood. In the overheated atmosphere established by Gian Maria Volonte ("John Wels"), who smolders in the role of the worst bad guy, Eastwood's tall, cool gringo becomes a magnetic anomaly. He's like a stalactite in a volcano. Music by Ennio Morricone ("Dan Savio").—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; July 26 and July 28.)

Five Star Final (1931)—Dwight Macdonald said that this newspaper exposé "had a moral and emotional force rare in the American cinema"—and, for all its creaks and staginess, it's still bracing and alarming. Edward G. Robinson plays the managing editor of a New York tabloid in decline. To boost circulation he orchestrates the revival of a two-decade-old murder story, with fatal results. The director, Mervyn LeRoy, pulls off the embattled-editor portions of the script (by Byron Morgan and Robert Lord, from a play by Louis Weitzenkorn) with a surprisingly brisk, unaffected style; the banter about journalistic content, or lack of it—about fluff, scandal, and pandering—may have actually gained in currency over the past sixty-five years. Robinson is a paragon of savvy, and Boris Karloff contributes a delicious, creepy cameo as a flowery reporter who poses as a clergyman. By contrast, the sad, intense supporting tale of the acquitted murderess (Frances Starr) and her shattered family (husband H. B. Warner, daughter Marian Marsh) smacks of Victorian melodrama.—M.S. (American Museum of the Moving Image; July 27.)

The Last Movie (1971)—Dennis Hopper directed this put-on, knockabout tragedy, in which he stars as a stunt man with an American film company in Peru who becomes a Christ figure when the natives imitate filmmaking. The movie grinds to a painful halt right at the start; it is visually beautiful, but the editing is so self-destructive that it's as if Hopper had slashed his own canvases. Cinematography by Laszlo Kovacs; screenplay by Stewart Stern.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; July 25.)

Mayerling (1936)—This beautifully made version of the legendary tragic love affair is one of the most memorable of all French romantic movies; Anatole Litvak directed with far more delicacy than he showed in his later work. Charles Boyer hangs a cigarette on his Hapsburg lip and grabs a girl's leg and the movie takes off. In this account Boyer's Archduke Rudolf is a dissolute voluptuary redeemed by his love for the innocent Maria Vetsera—and the young

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Danielle Darrieux is so sexy and lovely in the role that you can just about believe it all. In French.—P.K. (Florence Gould Hall; July 30.

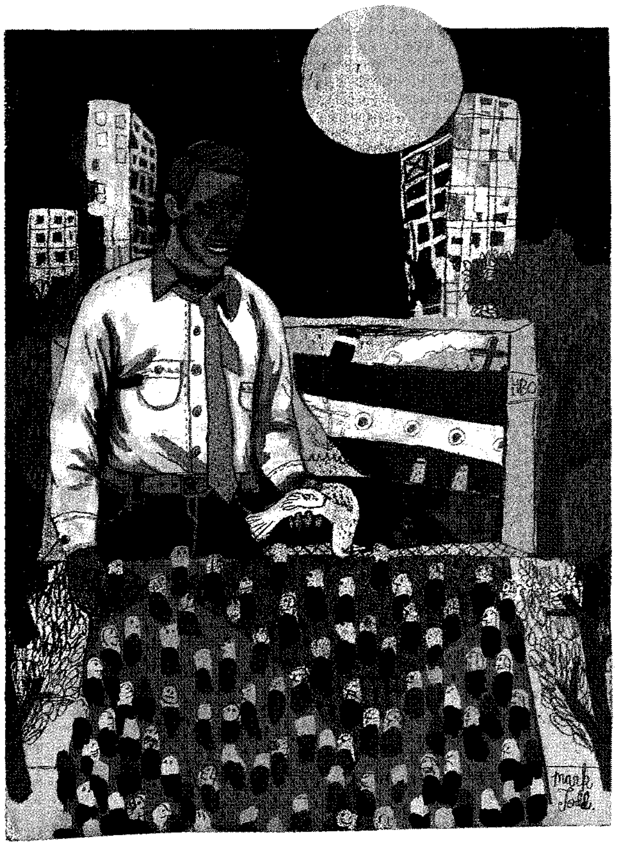
One-Eyed Jacks (1961)—Marlon Brando, the Great Unpredictable, is both star and director of this Western about a bandit whose only purpose in life is to kill his former partner. As the prospective victim, Karl Malden makes a tough antagonist. Katy Jurado and Pina Pellicer, a lovely young Mexican actress, give aid and comfort to the two enemies. The picture is of variable quality: it has some visual grandeur; it also has some bizarrely brutal scenes.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; July 26 and July 28.)

On the Waterfront (1954)—The director, Elia Kazan, and the writer, Budd Schulberg, start out to expose racketeering in the waterfront unions, and wind up trying to make the melodrama transcend itself. They fail, but it's still one of the most powerful American movies of the fifties, largely because of Marlon Brando's performance as the inarticulate, instinctively alienated bum, Terry Malloy. The attempt at dynamic Christian symbolism and Karl Malden's big scenes as a conscientious priest are far below the imaginative level of the simpler, more realistic scenes, and Kazan hypes up the hollowest parts of the melodrama. (In order to have a triumphant, audience-pleasing finish, what actually happened in the dock situation that the film was based on has been falsified; the model for Terry Malloy did not succeed in toppling the crooked bosses.) It's a near-great film, though. With Rod Steiger, Eva Marie Saint, and Lee J. Cobb as an avaricious union boss.—P.K. (Bryant Park; July 29.)

Picnic (1955)—The director, Joshua Logan, later confessed, "I'm not so sure that Kim Novak wasn't the chief reason for the great success of 'Picnic.'" Novak plays Madge, a small-town Kansas beauty for whom being beautiful isn't enough: she risks scandal when she dumps her well-connected beau (Cliff Robertson) for his best friend, a virile drifter (William Holden). This study of the roles that men and, especially, women in the rural Midwest play, from Madge's misfit smart-girl sister (Susan Strasberg) to a self-styled "old-maid schoolteacher" (Rosalind Russell, at her screeching worst), pegs each female character to a cross, and Logan's direction rams every nail home. But Novak's Madge is a fluid, unpredictable presence. The actress captures for all time the acute humiliation of a daughter grilled by her mother about sex. And she keeps Madge's response to the drifter tantalizingly ambiguous—until a hip-swaying, shoulder-swinging dance that's one of the most seductive explosions of passion in the movies. Daniel Taradash adapted William Inge's play; James Wong Howe did the handsome wide-screen cinematography.—M.S. (Film Forum 2; starting July 26.)

The Searchers (1956)—John Wayne is the taciturn loner, Ethan Edwards, a Confederate veteran who arrives at his married brother's ranch in Texas in 1868. Learning that there are Comanches in the area, Ethan and Martin (Jeffrey Hunter), a part-Cherokee young man who lives with the brother's family, go off to look for them. While they're away the Comanches attack the ranch; they return to a scene of horror. The ravaged body of one niece is found and buried; the search for the other one goes on. It's a peculiarly formal and stilted movie; the lines are often awkward and the line readings worse, and the film is often static, despite economic, quick editing. What made this John Ford Western fascinating to the young directors who hailed it in the seventies as a great work and as a key influence on them is the compulsiveness of Ethan's search for his niece and his bitter, vengeful racism: he hates Indians so much that he intends to kill her when he finds her, because she will have become the "squaw" to what he calls a "buck." Throughout, the performances are highly variable.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; July 25 and July 30.)

Some Like It Hot (1959)—Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon are the musicians who witness the St. Valentine's Day Massacre and then hide out from the mobsters by disguising themselves as women and joining an all-girl band. Marilyn Monroe and Joe E. Brown are their somewhat confused love partners. Curtis demonstrates a parodistic gift with an imitation of Cary Grant (which he went on doing for years afterward), and Lemmon is demoniacally funny—he really gives in to women's clothes, and begins to think of himself as a sexy girl. Monroe gives perhaps her most characteristic performance, which means that she's both charming and embarrassing; Brown is inspired, the way he was years before in Max Reinhardt's movie of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," when he made some of us weep from laughter. Directed (unevenly) by Billy Wilder, who also collaborated on the screenplay with I. A. L. Diamond.—P.K. (A Different Light Bookstore; July 28.)


On July 29 in Bryant Park, Marlon Brando in "On the Waterfront."

MARK TODD

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Films made in Hollywood between 1969 and 1975. July 24: "The Last Picture Show" (1971, Peter Bogdanovich) and "The Sugarland Express" (1974, Steven Spielberg). . . . July 25: "The Last Movie" (†) and "The American Dreamer" (1971, L. M. "Kit" Carson and Lawrence Schiller), a documentary about the making of "The Last Movie." . . ¶ From July 26: "Picnic" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363)—"Girlfriends," short films by or about lesbians.

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280)—A program of films directed by Satyajit Ray, all in Bengali. Through July 25: "Aparajito" (1958). . . . From July 26: "The World of Apu" (1959).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A showing of films from the museum's Martin Scorsese Collection. July 25 and July 30 at 2:30: "Tension at Table Rock" (1956, Charles Marquis Warren). . . . July 25 at 6 and July 27 at 1: "Tennessee's Partner" (1955, Allan Dwan). . . . July 25 at 8 and July 30 at 6: "The Searchers" (†). . . . July 26 at 2:30 and July 28 at 5: "One-Eyed Jacks" (†). . . . July 26 at 6 and July 28 at 3: "A Fistful of Dollars" (†). . . . July 26 at 8: "Johnny Guitar" (1954, Nicholas Ray). . . . July 27 at 3: "The Indian Fighter" (1955, André de Toth). . . . July 27 at 5: "Cheyenne Autumn" (1964, John Ford). . . . July 28 at 1: "Desert Fury" (1947, Lewis Allen). . . . July 29 at 2:30: "Unconquered" (1947, Cecil B. De Mille). . . . July 29 at 6: "Silver River" (1948, Raoul Walsh).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—A program of French films based on French novels, plays, or short stories. July 24 at 2 and 6:15 and July 25 at 4 and 9: "Le Trou" (1959, Jacques Becker). . . . July 24 at 4:15 and 8:30 and July 25 at 2: "Goupi-Mains-Rouges" (1943, Becker). . . . ¶ July 25 at 6:30: "The Love Lesson" (1995, Sharon Greytak). . . . ¶ From July 26: The Fifth New York Video Festival.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—Films directed by Mervyn LeRoy. July 27 at 2: "I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang" (1932). . . . July 27 at 4: "Five Star Final" (†). . . . July 28 at 2: "The Heart of New York" (1932). . . . July 28 at 3:30: "Anthony Adverse" (†).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—July 30 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Mayerling" (†).

The 19th Asian American International Film Festival—Four days (July 25-28) of new films from Hong Kong, China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. For information, call 925-8685.)

Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with Looney Tunes and newsreels. The feature on July 29 will be "On the Waterfront" (†). (Rain date is the following night.)

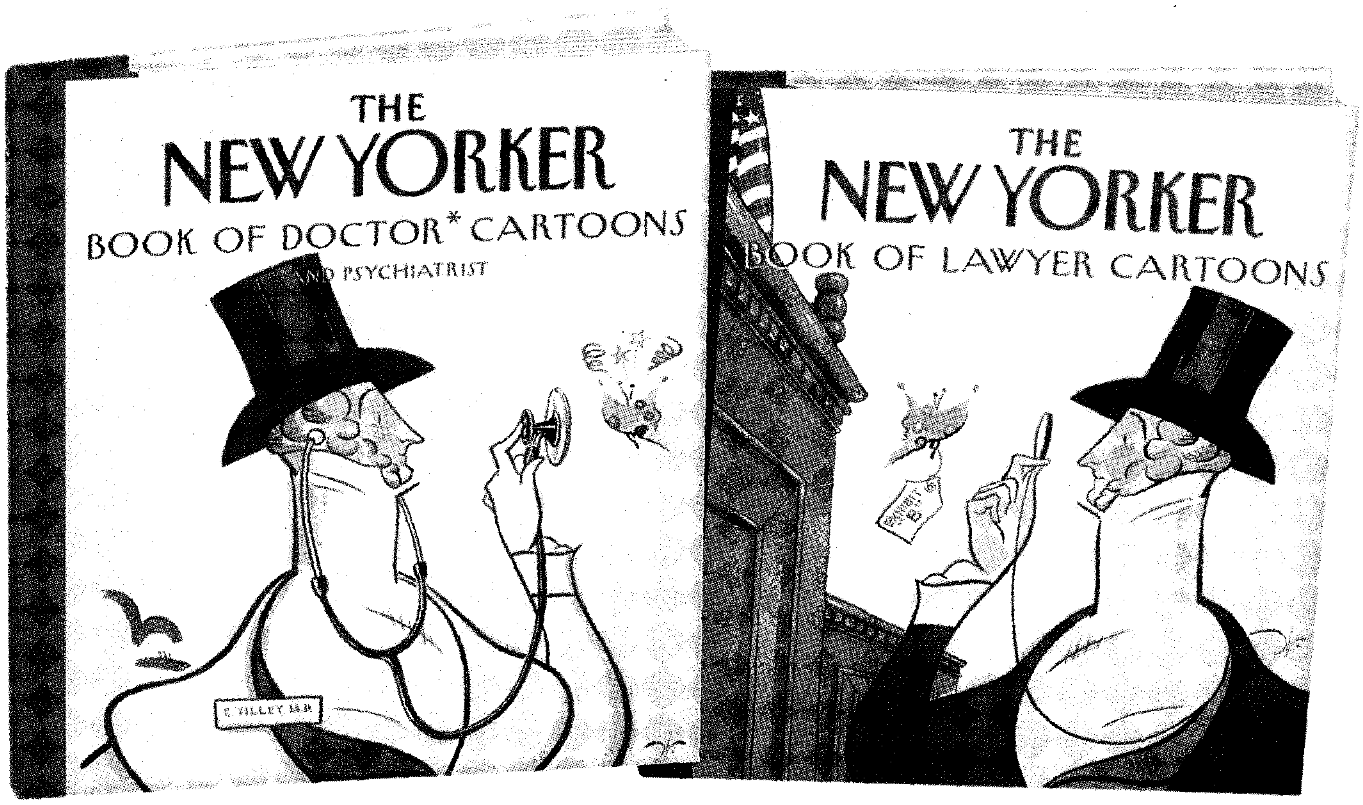
Film al Fresco, at Le Madri Restaurant, 168 W. 18th St. (727-8022)—Sunday evenings, more films out-of-doors, with food and live music beginning at 6 and the movie starting at about 8:30. On July 28, the feature will be "Unforgiven" (1992, Clint Eastwood). (Rain date is the following night.)

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On July 28 at 7, the feature will be "Some Like It Hot" (†).

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—A program of African films. July 24 at 3: "Un Certain Matin" (1992, Fanta Regina Nacro; Burkina Faso) and "Mortu Nega" (1987, Flora Gomes; Guinea-Bissau). . . . July 24 at 6:30: "The Battle of the Sacred Tree" (1994, Wanjiru Kinyanjui; Kenya). . . . July 30 at 3: "Chronicle of the Year of Embers" (1975, Muhammad Lakhdar-Hamima; Algeria). . . . July 30 at 6:30: "Harvest 3000" (1975, Haile Gerima; Ethiopia).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—July 26 at 8: "Triumph of the Will" (1935, Leni Riefenstahl). . . . July 27 at 8 and July 28 at 7: "Olympia" (1938, Riefenstahl).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—"Karaoke" and "Cold Lazarus," the final works by writer Dennis Potter (1935-94), are being shown at the museum on a rotating basis. July 25-26 at 6 and July 27-28 at 2: "Cold Lazarus" (1996, Renny Rye), with Albert Finney.



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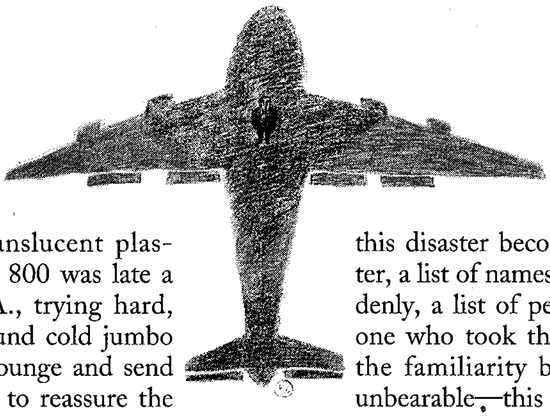
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

A PERSONAL LOSS

FOR anyone who flies to Paris often, T.W.A. Flight 800, departing from Kennedy at 7 P.M., was the 5:31 from Grand Central to Bronxville: less glamorous than Air France, less like a bus ride than the Virgin Atlantic flight from Newark—the generic representative of something amazing that had become mundane.

The ritual was as regular as any ritual could be, both in its predictable small annoyances and in the large excitement waiting at the end—the small annoyances necessary, perhaps, to frame the large excitement. You left from the Saarinen terminal, with its cast-concrete dome, echoing still with the optimism of the early sixties, its upstairs bar no longer filled with jet-setters but with software salesmen drinking Martinis out of translucent plastic cups. Flight 800 was late a lot, but T.W.A., trying hard, would pass around cold jumbo shrimp in the lounge and send the captain out to reassure the passengers. His tones consoled; his promises appeased; the shrimp nourished.



The flight itself was as ritualized as the wait. The collection of people always seemed eerily the same: the backpacking kids in the rear rows; the honeymooners excitedly reviewing their *Michelins* up front; the second-honeymooners in first class, with their frequent-flier miles and their reservations for lunch tomorrow at L'Ami Louis. The flight attendants, mostly round and motherly, now that the world has made flight attendance a craft rather than an escapade, unfolded boxes for the babies to sleep in—sky cradles, some used to call them, though others, including the attendants, referred to them as baby boxes.

THERE is something about an air disaster that is, for our age, less like the railroad wrecks of the nineteenth century than like the shipwrecks; we are touched not only by a sense of loss but by a sense of the fragility of trust. Yet nineteenth-century mourning at least had the decency to be mournful—it did not seem as much like gawking as ours does. There is, perhaps, a tragedy built into living in a late-modern mass society, dominated by voracious and impersonal media. It may be that only a disaster of this scale, and in such familiar circumstances, can bring home the reality: this disaster becomes our disaster, a list of names becomes, suddenly, a list of people. For anyone who took this flight often, the familiarity became almost unbearable—this particular person in these particular circumstances, coming to this intolerable end. For once, a tragedy involved no effort of empathy at all; for once it was too easy to imagine.

If the loss of Flight 800's passengers must mean something, let it be a symbol of the limits of symbolism. Let the generic familiarity of their last flight become, in our memories, an image of its opposite: of the irreplaceable individuals we knew for so long only as types—the backpacking kids, the old couples in first class, the babies in their makeshift cradles.

KLEIN/NOT KLEIN

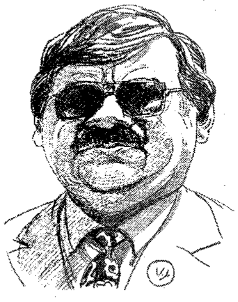
JOE KLEIN began his press conference in Manhattan last Wednesday very simply, without any of the bold extemporizing on the subject of man's (or at least his) essential dualism that would come later. That morning, the Washington *Post* had fingered Klein, a columnist for *Newsweek*, as Anonymous, the author of the season's best-selling political novel, and he was there to concede. "My name is Joe Klein, and I wrote 'Primary Colors,' " Klein said with a little boy's grin. But then came the questions: Hadn't Klein denied, point blank, being the author on several occasions over the past few months? Didn't lying that way undermine his credibility as a journalist?

Those questions assumed, however, that Klein actually *was* Anonymous at the time he wrote "Primary Colors," and this, Klein said, was technically not true. He compared his repeated denials of authorship to "times when I've had to lie to protect a source," positing a kind of radical dualism between Klein qua novelist and Klein qua political writer: Deep Throat, *c'est moi*. This is, of course, straight out of the neo-Freudian object-relations theory of Melanie Klein (no relation). As Stephen A. Mitchell and Margaret J. Black write in "Freud and Beyond," "Klein portrayed the infant's experience as composed of two sharply polarized states, dramatically contrasting in both conceptual organization and emotional tone." The "paradigmatic images" of these states center on the infant at the breast—distinguishing between that which

ILLUSTRATIONS BY VICTOR JUHASZ

CAPITAL COP

OTHER cops call their informants snitches or stoolies, and often treat them with contempt. Carl Shoffler, the legendary Washington, D.C., police intelligence detective, who died on July 13th, called them "sources" and, sometimes, friends. He gave out his home telephone number to mobsters on the run, to suspected terrorists, and to defectors from hate groups. For most people engaged in police work, especially those devoted to their families, such a practice would be unthinkable. But for Shoffler it was a way to build trust. He needed those unsavory informants; he didn't coddle them, but they knew that he would always be up front and straight with them.



Carl Shoffler

In 1982, Shoffler and another detective, Michael Hubbard, wrote a confidential police memorandum that would eventually cause havoc in D.C. The detectives had found three reliable informants who were ready to testify before a grand jury that they had witnessed the mayor, Marion Barry, snorting cocaine at a private party in a strip club. A copy of their memo was hand-carried to the U.S. Department of Justice. To Shoffler and Hubbard's bewilderment, little action was taken on Barry's case until 1990, when F.B.I. agents videotaped him in a hotel room with a former model and arrested him for cocaine possession. He was later convicted and sent to prison for six months.

When Shoffler was stricken with pancreatitis last month, among the first to call his wife with words of comfort was a fugitive wanted for murder. "This is Daoud," he said, and Helene Shoffler knew at once that it was David Belfield, now known as Daoud Salahuddin, a former Howard University student and Muslim militant wanted for the 1980 assassination of a onetime press officer for the Iranian Embassy. Until Shoffler fell ill, he was trying to arrange Belfield's surrender. To elude a worldwide F.B.I. manhunt, Belfield had taken refuge in paramilitary training camps in Iran, Afghanistan, and Lebanon. He was in deep cover, but Shoffler, working his sources, had somehow managed to make contact. The fugitive and the detective talked frequently; Shoffler even got Belfield to agree to a television interview earlier this year in which he admitted that he was indeed the triggerman in the 1980 assassination.

One of Shoffler's favorite sources was a former Mob strong-arm man who worked undercover to penetrate a Mafia loan-sharking ring that targeted government employees. When the source, who is now in hiding, learned that Shoffler had died, he sobbed uncontrollably. "I owe my life to this man," the former mobster said. "My family owes him everything. What do I do now?"

Shoffler put together the informants, cops, federal agents, and investigative strategies that led to the closing of dozens of major cases. His style was stealth. The one time he was not able to avoid the limelight was in the early morning of June 17, 1972. It was his twenty-seventh birthday, and Shoffler was working undercover with two other policemen in an unmarked car when a dispatcher asked them to check out a possible burglary in progress at the Watergate office complex. When Shoffler and the other cops arrived at the offices of the Democratic National Committee, they made the arrests that eventually led to the resignation of President Nixon.

Among the tributes to Carl Shoffler last week was this: "He always told the truth and let the chips fall where they may. You cannot ask more of a man or a law-enforcement officer." The words came from G. Gordon Liddy, the man who plotted the Watergate burglary. Years after the burglary, the arresting officer and the toughest bird in the whole Watergate scandal became unlikely buddies.

—IRA SILVERMAN

nourishes and that which causes pain. So, too, was Klein a man of double identity: Klein$_1$, the journalist, and Klein$_2$, auteur—mother and child, infant and breast, self and source somehow existing independently in one physical space. As he explained, as Anonymous, in a May article in the *Times Book Review*, "There are two of us now. There is 'me' and there is 'Anonymous.' "

Who was it, for example, who apparently put down three hundred and twenty thousand dollars in cash on a new six-hundred-and-thirty-thousand-dollar house in Pelham? Easy. Klein$_2$. He's the millionaire. And just who was young Sophie Klein referring to when, according to the Washington *Post*, she allegedly told schoolmates, "My daddy is rich"? Clearly, Klein$_2$. Not so, though, in February, when *New York* published a textual analysis of "Primary Colors" claiming that Klein was definitely Anonymous. It was Klein$_1$ who called *New York's* editor, Kurt Andersen, in a rage, questioning Andersen's ethics. Klein$_2$ would never have done that. After all, Klein$_2$, Klein$_1$ wrote in his *Times* article, is "funnier than I am . . . more demure . . . more dignified."

Things weren't so clear, though, at Wednesday's news conference. "Joe Klein has never lied in a column and will never," the man on the spot said. But who was talking? Klein$_1$ or Klein$_2$? Was this an inadvertent slip into the third person or was Klein$_2$, in a moment of Kleinian transference, giving expert witness to the character of his doppelgänger, Klein$_1$, the journalist? It was impossible to tell, and after what seemed like the hundredth angry question the two men collected their disparate selves, turned from the podium, and fled.

CENTER STAGE?

BIRCH EVANS BAYH III, who goes by Evan, is the Democratic governor of Indiana. He is alarmingly precocious, having been thirty-two when he was first elected and now finishing his second (and, by law, last) term in office not long after turning forty. He is popular and handsome, and has been described by Al From, the president of the Democratic Leadership Council, as "one of the brightest rising young stars in the Party." Yet, beyond Washington's salons and Indiana's borders, he also happens to be an unknown.

Early one evening last week in Indianapolis, Bayh was in his study in the Governor's Mansion talking about the possibility that his profile might soon rise exponentially. Bob Dole had just announced that New York Representative Susan Molinari would be the keynote speaker at the G.O.P. Convention, so attention had shifted to the question of the Democrats' choice, and Bayh's name was near the top of everyone's list, including the White House's. On being asked if he was interested, Bayh, who looked every bit the amiable Midwestern frat guy—khaki pants, blue oxford shirt, white golf cap, enviable tan—replied dutifully, "It would be a wonderful opportunity, but I'm not even remotely trying to promote myself." It hasn't taken any selling, however, to convince a certain kind of Democrat that Bayh would make an ideal symbol: a symbol of the Party's break with its liberal past.

To begin with, few figures are more emblematic of that past than Bayh's father, Birch, a Great Society stalwart who held his Senate seat for eighteen years before losing it, in 1980, to Dan Quayle. Eight years later, Evan, who had managed his dad's last campaign, launched his own bid for governor, as something of a New Democrat. While capitalizing on his father's lingering popularity, he repudiated his father's brand of liberalism, most notably by pledging not to raise taxes. After eight years in office, he still hasn't raised them. Meanwhile, Bayh has instituted work-based welfare reform and embraced conservative anti-crime measures, including capital punishment.

"I think on the whole he's been a good Republican governor," the chairman of the Indiana G.O.P. has said—the sort of comment that more than a few on the left have also been heard to mutter. Yet Bayh insists that there is nothing un-Democratic about being hard on crime or, say, favoring a balanced budget. "The people who get hurt first, and worst, when states go bankrupt are the ones who are the most vulnerable," he said. "If you believe in doing more on education, or on health care, or job training, you can't do it with huge deficits staring you in the face."

Bayh's type of centrism has, it seems, become his party's official orthodoxy. Earlier this month, Democratic officials put together a rough draft of their party's platform, which touts the Democratic efforts to enact the death penalty, endorses several of President Clinton's recent social-policy placebos (school uniforms, the V-chip, a victims'-rights amendment), and repeats Clinton's utterance that "the era of big government is over." At the same time, it retreats from the Party's declaration of four years ago that universal health care is a "right" and, for the first time in decades, omits a call for a constitutional amendment guaranteeing equal rights for women.

THE BEARDED WOMAN

Each time she noticed,
she had meant
to pluck the three black hairs,
but the days were short;
her fingers touched her chin
then forgot.
Thus fatigue grew curling into
wisdom.

—Jane Hirshfield

For the White House, picking Bayh to deliver the keynote would be another way of advertising that the new Democratic Party is, in fact, the New Democratic Party. For Bayh himself, the job would be an advertisement of a different sort. After stepping down at the end of this year, he is expected to start gearing up for a run against Republican Senator Dan Coats in 1998, and the keynote would help make his face known to the PACs and assorted moneymen one needs for a senatorial campaign these days.

Though Bayh admitted that he is "leaning strongly" toward taking on Coats, he maintained that his eight-month-old twin boys are giving him pause. Yet when they appeared with their mother, Susan, he was quick to point out that one of them, Birch Evans IV, had plainly inherited the family's political genes. "He's always looking for hands to shake," Bayh explained, with evident satisfaction. "He was born with the fire in the belly." A father's words, of course, but also those of someone who knows the feeling.

A COSMOPOLITAN STAYS HOME

ONE of the saddest stories of modern Russia is the decline of the Russian music scene. The repression of the Soviet era and the economic havoc of the Yeltsin years have resulted in what the critic Lev Ginzburg calls "an endless desert." Mstislav Rostropovich, Evgeny Kissin, and Sviatoslav Richter are only the most glittering names in a long litany of the missing and the rarely seen. "In Moscow, we have about twenty-five orchestras and almost no really qualified conductors," Ginzburg said recently. "Thank God there is *something* going on in St. Petersburg."

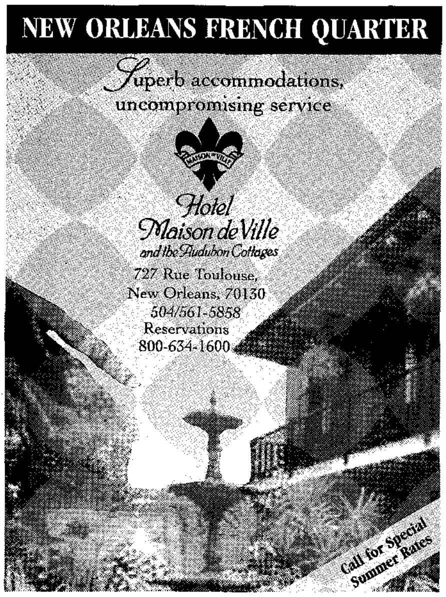
The main something in St. Petersburg is the conductor and director of the Kirov Opera, Valery Gergiev. While the Bolshoi ballet and opera companies in Moscow have declined to the point of embarrassment, Gergiev's orchestra, based at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, is as vital as any in Europe. Gergiev does not stay entirely at home—he has a steady conducting gig in Holland and will bring the Kirov Orchestra and Chorus to Lincoln Center from July 22nd through the 26th as part of Festival '96—but he has resisted all blandishments to live in permanent, voluptuous exile.

Recently, during the Stars of the White Nights Festival at the Maryinsky, Gergiev sat backstage at his enormous antique desk. He had just finished conducting Shostakovich's "Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District." Gergiev is in his mid-forties and is appallingly handsome. Soaked with sweat, he treated himself to a small glass of beer and a whiff of all the bouquets that were piled up on his desk. As he talked, Gergiev and his assistant went through his schedule for the coming months—a journey through a stream of airports, meetings, and five-act operas.

"Always at the end, thankfully, there is coming home," he said. "I am easy with Western culture—I love, enjoy, and value every minute I spend in the West—but I never forget how my life relates to Russia and even to the old Soviet system."

The Kirov plays its share of German and Italian classics, but it specializes in Russian works that are infrequently produced on American and European stages. "It was always possible to conduct some of these things, but I think we are totally free with our choices now," he said. "What I try to do here is keep it all moving. Physically, it is very difficult, but once in a while I get paid back with an incredible feeling of joy." ♦

"A Personal Loss," Adam Gopnik; "Klein/Not Klein," Malcolm Gladwell; "Center Stage?," John Heilemann; "A Cosmopolitan Stays Home," David Remnick.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ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

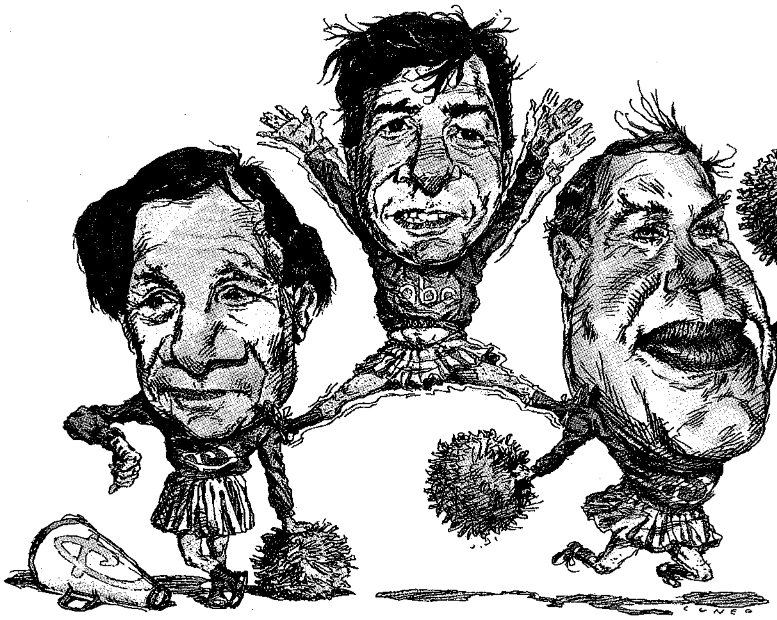
MARRIAGE, NO HONEYMOON

How troubled is the Disney-ABC union?

BY KEN AULETTA

THOMAS S. MURPHY has a notorious aversion to gossip, and for that reason his remarks at a private dinner at Le Cirque on May 23rd were startling. The dinner was a testimonial for Murphy, the recently retired chairman and chief executive officer of Capital Cities/ABC, and the host was Roone Arledge, the president of ABC News. Peter Jennings and Barbara Walters were there, as were Ted Koppel, Diane Sawyer, Sam Donaldson, several ABC News executives, and Robert Iger, the president of Capital Cities/ABC. Arledge said that while the News division "didn't always agree" with the parent company, particularly about Capital Cities' stinginess, he regarded Murphy and Capital Cities as true patrons of ABC News. Murphy, the son of a Brooklyn politician, was a comforting presence, a man with a ready smile who liked to stand in line in the executive dining room with ABC colleagues.

The mood at Le Cirque was wistful, even anxious, for the marriage between ABC and its new corporate parent, the Walt Disney Company, had at times been strained. Murphy, responding to Arledge's remarks, tried to reassure the news people that Disney understood the special mission of ABC News. Something was gnawing at Murphy, however, and finally he could not contain it; speaking of Disney's chairman and chief executive officer, Michael Eisner, and Disney's president, Michael Ovitz, he said, "I hope they can work out their problems."



Mike Ovitz, Bob Iger, and Michael Eisner: signs of strain.

Sam Donaldson, stunned, reverted to press-conference mode. "What are those differences?" he asked. And Barbara Walters said, "What about Ovitz?"

Murphy began to mumble, but that did not deter Donaldson or Walters. Donaldson turned to Sawyer, who was seated to Murphy's right, and said, "Diane, you probably know Ovitz the best. What do you think?"

Sawyer hesitated, then said, "He was my husband's agent"—Ovitz's Creative Artists Agency represented the director Mike Nichols—"and I've had dinner with him a couple of times."

JOHN CUNEO

Before she could continue, Bob Iger touched her arm and stopped her. "It's inappropriate for me to sit here and listen to a discussion of Michael Ovitz," he said. Everyone understood Iger's intervention. But everyone also realized that Iger could have remained silent, for he had once been designated Murphy's heir, and no one in the room had been more affected by Ovitz's appointment.

The subject was changed, but the fact was out: Tom Murphy, who is on Disney's board, had just appeared to confirm to the people at his table a rumor Disney was eager to dispel—the rumor about trouble between Eisner and Ovitz. "Murphy volunteered it," one of five guests I spoke with says. "Obviously, it was something on his mind."

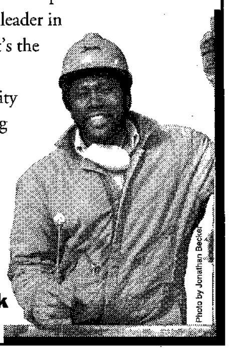
Because of this rumor, Michael Eisner had gone to great lengths in recent weeks to demonstrate that Disney/ABC was a happy family. At ABC's annual meeting of affiliates, which was held at Disney World from June 4th through June 6th, he publicly denied accounts of friction, saying, "Despite what may have been written, we're having a good time." He went on to tell the ABC station managers that Ovitz had been his friend for twenty-five years, and that one reason Disney had acquired ABC was Eisner's conviction that he could hire Ovitz to help him manage this communications giant.

Privately, however, Eisner has groused about Ovitz's management style, telling associates that Ovitz, with his agent background, often pursues too many deal options and flits from subject to subject. Eisner himself, of course, has had to make a difficult adjustment: in a very short time, he has had to learn to share power with a big name who enjoys the spotlight as much as he does.

In the Hollywood colony, everyone has an opinion about the Eisner-Ovitz union, but few have any facts. At Disney, anxiety about the partnership is expressed by many people, including an executive who admires Eisner and knows him well: "He said to me one time, 'You know, I knew and vacationed with and dined with Michael Ovitz for twenty-five years, but I didn't know him at all. That's the mistake I made when I brought him in here. He doesn't know how business operates.' " Although there are those who think highly of Ovitz and say that things have improved, the griping persists among both ABC and Disney executives, some of whom may be jealous that another executive has been interposed between them and Eisner.

Obviously, Ovitz, as he has told friends, has had a "steep learning curve." As chairman of the Creative Artists Agency, he had about five hundred employees; Disney has a hundred and seventeen thousand "cast members," as employees are called. In contrast to Eisner, who conveys an infectious enthusiasm, Ovitz has a grave mien. Some of his new colleagues, among them Herbert Granath, the chairman of Disney/ABC International Television and a longtime ABC executive, who travelled to China and Europe with Ovitz, think that he has taken well to his new role. "He's a quick study," Granath said. "Very bright. A clear thinker. I like him. And I was prepared not to." In denying rumors of friction with Eisner, Ovitz asks associates, "If our relationship were as bad as the rumors suggest, why would we go on vacation together?" On June 8th, the two men and their wives—Jane Eisner and Judy Ovitz are close friends—joined five other couples for a weeklong bicycling trip through the Loire Valley.

THE sometimes bumpy marriage between Eisner and Ovitz parallels the surprisingly rough path that Disney has travelled since it announced late last July that it was purchasing Capital Cities/ABC, for just over nineteen billion dollars. At the time, Eisner talked about the "synergy" and "branding" possibilities that combining the two companies would permit, and about linking ABC to the Disney TV-and-movie factory. Capital Cities would bring to the new company its ABC network, ten TV stations, twenty-one radio stations and six radio networks, ESPN, and a variety of other assets. Disney would bring its film, television, and animation studios, and the Disney cable channel, theme parks, publishing enterprises, and retail stores. Together, they would create the world's largest media company—one with a market value of fifty billion dollars. "The four most important programming platforms that enable media



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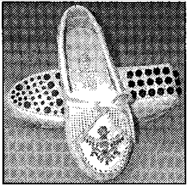

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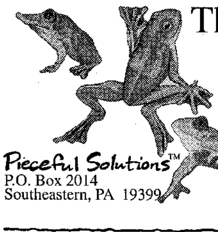

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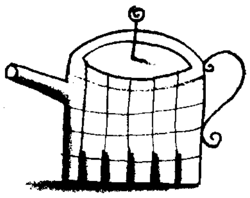
and entertainment companies to compete successfully in overseas markets are news, sports, movies, and family entertainment," Ovitz later told Disney shareholders. "Without ABC, Disney owned only two of these basic four platforms—family programming and movies."

When the merger was announced, ABC ranked first in prime-time entertainment, first in nightly news, and first in morning news shows, with "Good Morning America." Ten months later, ABC trailed NBC in prime-time entertainment ratings, and had lost about ten per cent of its core audience. "Good Morning America" is now a distant second to NBC's "Today," and, according to a senior ABC executive, the network is scouting for new anchors. News executives fret that "ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings," after seven years in first place, will be overtaken during the Summer Olympics by NBC, and that they may lose Diane Sawyer when a ninety-day window opens in her contract this fall, and even lose Ted Koppel when his contract expires, in December.

ABC's ratings decline has been accompanied by its having to adjust to an entirely different corporate culture. Murphy and his longtime partner, Daniel Burke, who imparted a sense of family to ABC, have been replaced by a California-based colossus. Where Murphy and Burke prided themselves on decentralized management, Disney and the omnipresent Eisner demand more and more centralized management. Murphy and Burke shut down ABC's strategic-planning department; Disney relies on one. Murphy and Burke shied away from publicity; Eisner and Ovitz are showmen. "Disney's culture revolves around Eisner and Burbank," an Eisner intimate says. "Ideas come from the top." Iger usually spends one day a week in Burbank attending Eisner's Monday lunches with top Disney managers.



Having spent nineteen billion dollars to acquire ABC, Disney of course feels that it has the right to intrude. Personnel flaps rarely got into the press at the pre-Disney ABC. But last winter ABC was humiliated when the presidency of ABC Entertainment—a job that wasn't vacant—was offered to a thirty-one-year-old NBC programmer, Jamie Tarses, who wasn't available. ABC was also embarrassed after it announced in November that it would launch a twenty-four-hour cable news service to rival CNN's, only to abandon the ambition in May. A company that was rarely the subject of rumor during Murphy and Burke's tenure was suddenly awash in intrigue.

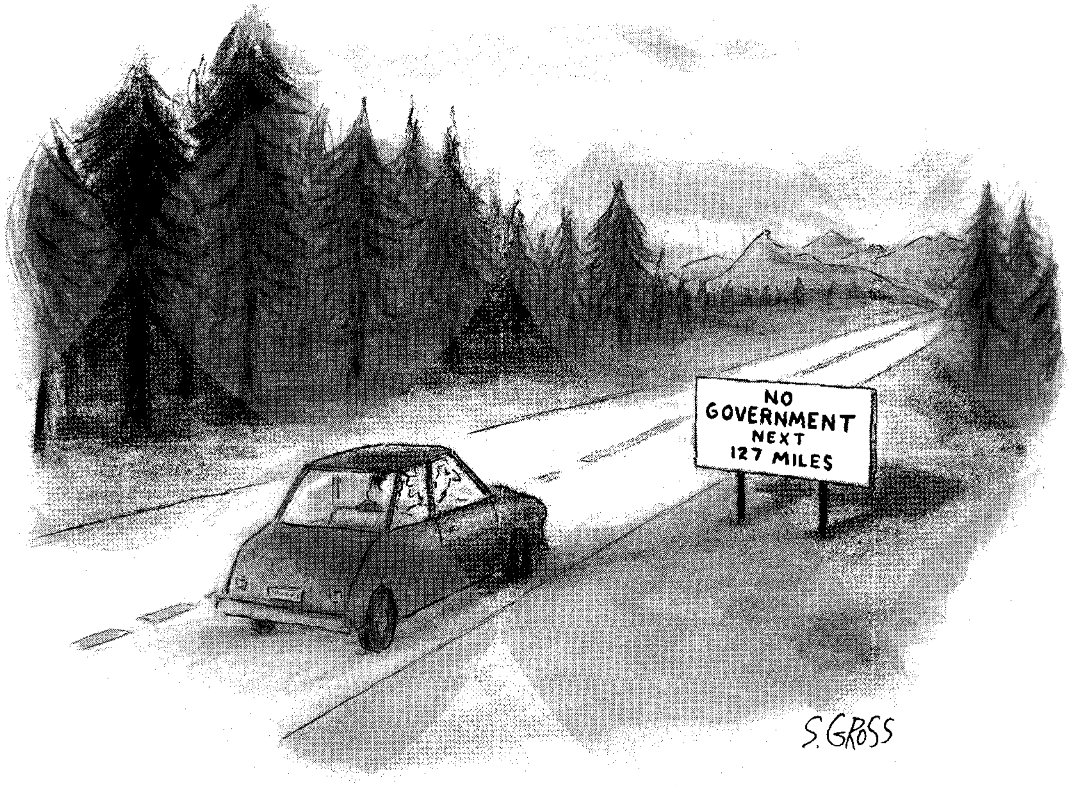
The merger of Disney and ABC raises questions about the drawbacks of giantism, and about whether synergy is as good for the public as it may be for Disney—about, essentially, whether Disney is too big, too centralized, too intent on asserting managerial control. Capital Cities was insular, and even unimaginative, about spending money. Disney is willing to spend, but it insists on doing things the Disney way—another form of insularity, perhaps. In recent years, this approach has got Disney in trouble in France, where the company sought to impose American notions on Euro Disney, and in Virginia, where it wanted to erect a theme park near hallowed Civil War sites. Unlike most media companies, Disney rarely seeks partners for joint ventures. Eisner's fierce response to competitors and the press only encourages the company's go-it-alone approach. The word "enemies" is frequently uttered at Disney. A top Disney executive, asked to explain Disney's bumpy start with ABC, replied, "There have been a series of events that might have gone unnoticed but were highlighted by our enemies."

WHEN the merger was first announced, Capital Cities/ABC executives, not unexpectedly, worried about their own fates. Although Eisner took care to assure Robert Iger that Disney planned to rely on him to run Capital Cities/ABC, Iger, a handsome man with a courtly manner, had reasons to be distressed. With the advent of Disney, Iger found that his place on an organization chart was equal to that of other Disney division heads. Then, within two weeks, he was pushed down another rung, when Eisner surprised Hollywood by announcing that Michael Ovitz would become Disney's president—a position that had been vacant since the death of Frank Wells, in a helicopter accident in April of 1994.

People at ABC didn't know much about Ovitz, but they were enthusiastic about Eisner. "He has an uncanny ability to look at a project, whether it's a film or an animated feature or a theme-park ride, and after a hundred really smart people have screened it he will invariably come in and ask the simplest, smartest question," says Stephen Bollenbach, who was Disney's chief financial officer from April, 1995, until last February, when he left to become C.E.O. of the Hilton Hotels Corporation.

Eisner's exuberance is apparent even in Disney's annual reports. In his letters as chairman he writes about things like his family, Thanksgiving in Vermont, and the stage version of "Beauty and the Beast," about which he commented, "I love this show. . . . I have seen it at least thirty times. You would think one of my kids wrote it!" Because Eisner is unabashedly commercial, he does not hesitate, as Paul Goldberger once observed in the *Times*, to treat classics as raw material. Most recently, Disney transformed "The Hunchback of Notre-Dame" into the story of a lovable animated character named Quasi. Why frighten children who buy Disney T-shirts?

Besides the good cheer spread by Eisner, executives at Capital Cities/ABC had other reasons to be pleased with the merger. Disney paid generously for its new stock, and some of the executives fattened their wallets. Iger received more than nineteen million dollars in stock and benefits; the network president, David Westin, received more than eight million dollars. But this winter Capital Cities/ABC also received a signal about synergy and a more centralized style of management when Steve Burke, the president of Euro Disney, was hired as executive vice-president of Capital Cities/ABC. (Burke is the son of Dan Burke, Tom Murphy's partner.) He had spent ten years at Disney and was credited with launching what would become five hundred Disney stores in ten countries. The word "synergy," which is gospel at Disney, is defined by Eisner as the "cross-promotion . . . engine that helps drive



our company.” In 1995, Disney sold more than fifteen billion dollars’ worth of Disney merchandise worldwide—a figure more than seven times the global box-office for Disney movies.

The networks are familiar with the notion of synergy, but Disney has pushed it further than anyone else. Not only did ABC, as a condition of the merger, agree to offer Disney a weekly prime-time hour and to open the whole of every Saturday morning to Disney-produced programming; it also pledged that half an hour every week could be filled by an animated series based on the Disney-owned National Hockey League team and entitled “The Mighty Ducks.” Disney’s Hyperion Books released best-selling autobiographies by three ABC sitcom stars, Tim Allen, Brett Butler, and Jeff Foxworthy. Early this summer, the ABC network broadcast a half-hour special on “The Hunchback of Notre-Dame,” placing it between two episodes of “Home Improvement,” the top-rated show on ABC. To assist one of Capital Cities’ newspapers, the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram*, Eisner agreed to a Fort Worth première of “Hunchback,” which the paper sponsored.

Michael Ovitz is a believer in synergy. Soon after he began work at Disney, in late September, he took his Gulfstream jet to Japan and China, began meeting monthly with the heads of Disney operations in Europe, held negotiations about a possible Disney purchase of the California Angels and the Los Angeles Lakers, and helped entice such former clients of the Creative Artists Agency as Sean Connery and Martin Scorsese to the Disney fold. He hoped to increase the company’s overseas revenues from twenty-three per cent of over-all revenues to fifty per cent within five years.

Ovitz was not shy about taking—and seeking—credit. In December, he was credited with hiring Geraldine Laybourne, who had built Nickelodeon into a Disney rival. According to a press release, she would become the president of Disney/ABC’s cable-programming efforts and also of a proposed twenty-four-hour all-news channel. Ovitz told Disney shareholders in January that he had “known and worked with Gerry for many years”; in fact they barely knew each other. Iger had known Laybourne for five years, and Laybourne has told friends that the key recruiter was Iger, not Ovitz.

Laybourne was excited about ABC’s plan for a cable news channel. The cost involved had always led Murphy and Burke to spurn Roone Arledge’s pleas to launch such a venture, but Disney appeared more willing to spend money, and Iger was a determined proponent, arguing that the company had to go forward in order to protect the ABC brand name in news. The happy message that this decision conveyed to Capital Cities/ABC was that Disney believed in ABC News and would spend whatever it took to keep it competitive.

At ABC Entertainment, however, Disney’s involvement has sometimes been deemed disruptive. For example, Ted Harbert, the president of ABC Entertainment, and Bob Iger wanted to sign Tom Selleck for a half-hour comedy, but Eisner, according to a person close to Selleck, was not a fan of the actor or of a project that seemed vague to him—there was no script and no writer. This person said, “Eisner told Iger, ‘I do not want to make that deal.’ This was the first time anything like this had ever happened to these guys. Eisner had legitimate reasons for saying no. But a deal was closed at CBS less than twenty-four hours later.” A Disney spokesman denies that Eisner alone made the decision, but Steve Bollenbach points out that Eisner micromanages “to a fault,” and adds, “The fault is that it physically drains him.”

INSIDE ABC, while there is widespread respect for Eisner’s skills, some people worry that creativity is being stifled by Disney’s insularity. There has been a falling out between Disney and Brillstein-Grey Entertainment, a successful independent TV-and-movie-production company that had signed a contract with Iger before the merger to produce shows for ABC. Perhaps as a result of Disney’s resistance to partnerships, Brillstein-Grey recently decided to sell an equity interest in its company to MCA, and there is a chance that it will sever its ties with ABC altogether. One Brillstein-Grey executive summed up Disney's philosophy this way: "They like to own the product they produce." Iger, distressed by what appeared to be Disney-inspired leaks to the *Wall Street Journal* disparaging Brillstein-Grey and its deal with ABC, sent a pointed memo to Eisner and Ovitz. The memo, according to people with firsthand knowledge, complained that Disney was sending the wrong message to the creative community.

A SOLO IN I

A geranium set against gray stones shows
how well I live here: on my knees

in showy red light come up to my chin.
As buttercup pollen leaped

to each "Do you?" and I said "Yes,"
like any other girl's my girl skin

shone with it. Then I disliked the answer.
In the Old World, a garden would be

intentional. It would make you rich,
would marry you off, would make you right.

Like my mother. When
I was too young,

I wanted geraniums in that place,
that light, by a stone wall,

and nowhere else. I'd seen them bend
to their lifelong heliotropism, pulled by light,

but grow up straight. With them, I'd thought,
you can count on the answer.

With them, I'd thought, a grown woman
can be rich, and right—can have an answer.

But we were not rich. It was no Old World.
I am not a girl. I am no girl's mother.

—Elizabeth Macklin

Making a home for creative talent became more and more important at ABC this winter because the arrival of Disney coincided with the collapse of ABC's prime-time ratings. As the ratings sank, so did staff morale. It fell lower when rumors began appearing in the press that Howard Stringer, the former CBS Broadcast Group president, was being recruited by his friend Ovitz to replace Bob Iger. Disney denied the rumor. Another rumor, however, turned out to be true. It was the clumsy attempt to hire Jamie Tarses away from NBC—where she had helped develop many of the network's urbane comedies—first to help, and then to replace, Ted Harbert.

Separately, Iger and Ovitz made contact with Tarses in the winter to see if she would be interested in the job. At one meeting with Iger, Tarses said she was eager to leave NBC, but Iger was circumspect, saying he could do nothing until she extricated herself from her two-year contract. Harbert, whose job she would be taking, did not know about these conversations until Warren Littlefield, the president of NBC Entertainment and Harbert's friendly rival, telephoned him. Tarses asked NBC for a release from her contract, and was granted a leave of absence while the network planned its fall schedule. Within days, the news was leaked to the press.

One thing that remains unclear is who spread the unsavory rumors that Don Ohlmeyer, NBC's West Coast president and Littlefield's boss, had sexually harassed Tarses. The rumor first appeared in the New York *Post*, on February 23rd. Ohlmeyer believes that Ovitz was the source. He was so incensed after the story appeared that he told *Time*, "Michael Ovitz is the Antichrist," and accused him in the Los Angeles *Times* of "spreading rumors with the sole intention of destabilizing NBC and my position here." He is still angry, and recently told me, "I have no question in my mind that this thing was choreographed by Ovitz." As for Ovitz, he has told associates, "On my children, it's not true."

An ABC executive says that Tarses did complain about sexual harassment during discussions early that winter, well before she approached her superiors about her contract. Publicly, Tarses has denied that she was sexually harassed. Jack Welch, the chairman of NBC's parent company, General Electric, was so irate over what he took to be an assault on Ohlmeyer's name and Tarses's contract that he dispatched an angry missive to Eisner. A Disney source says that Eisner was upset with Ovitz, and a Disney spokesman deflects criticism, accusing Welch of having written a "threatening" letter.

No one emerged from this episode unscathed. Aware of the frustrations and the unhappiness at ABC, Eisner and Ovitz became more solicitous of Bob Iger. In March, they expanded his job to include not just everything that fell under Capital Cities/ABC but also three Disney divisions: Walt Disney Television International, the Disney Channel, and Buena Vista Television's domestic syndication and pay-TV arms. An Eisner intimate describes the Disney chief's attitude toward Iger this way:

"He loves Bob. Bob is one of the best executives inside Disney, and Michael knows that and wants to make sure that Bob feels rewarded and comfortable."

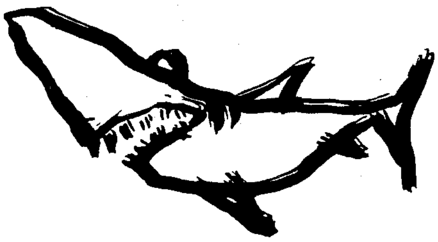
But Eisner's attention isn't always well received by ABC executives. In May, some ABC executives were dismayed when Eisner and Ovitz impulsively toyed with the Thursday 10 P.M. time slot. During a week when executives of the Entertainment division had flown east to make decisions about the fall schedule, Eisner and Ovitz proposed that News fill that hour with a new magazine format. There had always been a plan to grant this hour to News, but Eisner startled everyone by suggesting that Barbara Walters and Diane Sawyer be cohosts. There were three problems with this idea. First, a senior News executive says, Walters and Sawyer have a prickly relationship. A friend of both women says that Sawyer is still angry because Walters aced her out of an interview with Hillary and Bill Clinton that she thought was hers. Second, there was no solid editorial idea behind the proposal. And, finally, all this was being discussed on a Friday, and the schedule had to be set by Saturday.

In the end, Eisner and Ovitz backed off, but they and Iger and many others at ABC continued to worry about the new season. "They have a network identity crisis," a former network president observed. That identity crisis would be taken care of, a senior Disney official told me, because ABC would now be known as "the family network." He hastened to add that not all the shows would be G-rated, but this hardly allayed fears at ABC.

The day after the schedule was presented to advertisers and the press, Eisner and Ovitz were to have lunch with the ABC News bureau in Washington. At the last minute, the lunch was cancelled. One reason, an ABC executive says, was that Iger and Disney had made a decision over the weekend to kill the twenty-four-hour cable news channel, and Eisner didn't want to talk about their cable news plans when he knew they didn't have any. Iger had changed his mind because Geraldine Laybourne and others had shown him projections that the network could lose four hundred million dollars or more in the next four years. A senior network official, who, like others at ABC and Disney, did not wish to be quoted by name, has defended both the original decision and the final decision: "We had to take a look at it. And yet there was no way we could get an honest read on whether cable companies would carry us unless we said that we were serious." Most upset by the decision was Roone Arledge. He told Johnnie Roberts, of *Newsweek*, "I'm very disappointed."

ON June 4th, when the ABC-affiliate station managers stepped out of the buses that had carried them from their hotels at Disney World to a 7 P.M. cocktail party and dinner for the affiliates at the outdoor Disney-MGM Studios, they were greeted by a crowd of applauding, confetti-throwing people pleading for their autographs. The station managers smiled at these Disney "cast members." The next morning, in the Contemporary Resort Convention Center's Fantasia Ballroom, the network president, David Westin, came onstage after the blaring music stopped, and, without softening the audience by telling a few jokes, conceded that ABC was a network in "a season of transition." Later in the morning, Ted Harbert, who still didn't know if he was going to be replaced, used gallows humor while presenting ABC's new fall schedule. "Next week, I'm starting as the elevator-door operator" on a Disney ride, he declared.

Just after lunch, three men sat onstage—Iger sandwiched between Eisner and Ovitz. A question period began, and Eisner reassured the station managers, "The essence of the broadcast business is a local delivery business." He knew that a network rents rather than owns most of its distribution system. Then he spoke of "the sanctity of News," adding, "The public does not want to think that News is going through some Disneyesque sieve."



"Except for Peter Jennings putting on mouse ears," Ovitz cracked.

When Ovitz was asked to cite the biggest threat to ABC, he smartly responded, "Audience erosion," implicitly reminding the station managers that, despite the rebound that all the networks seemed to enjoy between 1992 and 1994, the nearly two-decade-long trend of declining network audiences has accelerated in the past two years. That, he said, is why Disney believes that only powerful brand names that stand for quality can stanch the bleeding.

It was a good meeting for ABC. Eisner praised Harbert's new schedule as "fantastic." The chairman of ABC's affiliates, Andrew Fisher, who is also the executive vice-president of the Broadcast Division of Cox Broadcasting, in Atlanta, told me that he was impressed by ABC's team, adding, "I'm of the view that people don't have brilliance one week and wake up stupid the next week."

On June 8th, a few days after the affiliate meeting, a story by Bill Carter in the *Times* described still another corporate soap opera. It reported that Eisner had held discussions with Marcy Carsey and Tom Werner, the heads of television's most successful independent production company, about acquiring their operation and library and also about hiring Carsey to supplant Harbert. The *Times* reported that Carsey and Werner had rejected both proposals.

Once again, the future plans of Jamie Tarses and Ted Harbert returned to center stage. On June 18th, Iger flew out to the West Coast, and over the next two days he persuaded Tarses to become the president of ABC Entertainment and Harbert to become its chairman. She would do the creative part, and he would control the purse strings. The handling of the entire affair remained an embarrassment.

Perhaps this rocky beginning will one day be seen as similar to ABC's initial year of adjustment to Capital Cities, in 1985. But as the first year of this awkward marriage was ending, a media executive who is not at ABC surveyed the scene and said, "Ted Harbert was hung out to dry. Jamie Tarses was hung out to dry twice. Michael Ovitz was hung out to dry by Eisner, who went around him to Marcy Carsey and Tom Werner. And Bob Iger was asked to clean up the mess left by the elephants." ♦

PERSONAL HISTORY

TICK

A day with a bloodsucker.

BY KATHRYN HARRISON

"So, do people get run over by cars and then God, who is invisible, just picks them up from where they are all flat and bloody and he throws them into Heaven?" my daughter asks. "Is that what happens?" She holds out her hands, palms upturned in a gesture of inquiry and impatience.

Sarah's theories of the afterlife are marked by athleticism—sudden changes of spiritual status accomplished by God's bouncing or kicking souls from one world to another. She's a defender of reincarnation, thinks of Heaven as a waiting room, and claims that women are impregnated when God hurls souls of the recently dead into empty female stomachs.

"Is that what you think happens?" I say. Sarah shrugs, drops her hands to her sides.

"I'm asking *you*," she says. "I know what I think."

I go on brushing my daughter's hair. We're standing before the window, looking out on a field bright with wildflowers. Arranged on the windowsill are the hair ornaments that Sarah has selected for the day: a set of pink barrettes, three green elastic ponytail holders, a fake tortoiseshell headband, and two ribbons. In sum, many too many decorations for one small head.

I brush longer than I need to. The tangles are out and the brushing soothes me with its repetitive motion, like sewing or sweeping or fucking, late-night, too-tired-to-fuck fucking.

"Hold still," I say to my daughter.

"I hate this," Sarah says.

"I know," I say. "Everyone does."

I gather the mass of my daughter's hair, pull it back over her shoulders. "Hold still," I say again. It's quixotic to embark on a French braid without having a television to tranquillize my five-year-old daughter, but that's also what makes these braids so beautiful on a small, always moving head: the very impossibility of them. I pick up the first handful of hair and weave in sections from the side, moving down the back of her skull. An undetected snarl halts my progress, and I reach for the hairbrush, which falls from the windowsill. I hold the hair with one hand while I stoop to retrieve the brush.

"Did Daddy make a hole in you with his penis?" Sarah asks.

"No!" I say. "What do you mean?"

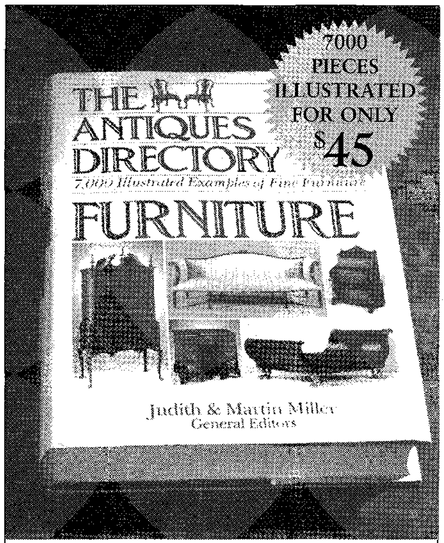
"Well, at school they said that babies come from seeds planted in the mother, and that the mother has a egg and that the fathers plant the seeds and that they do it with their penises, so what I mean is, is the penis like the little shovel thing that you use to make a hole before you plant a seed. That's what I mean."

"Oh," I say. "The fathers don't have to make a hole because the mothers have a place for the seed to go in. Everything is all ready for the seed."

"Is it your mouth? Do you swallow it and then it grows in your stomach?"

"No," I say. "It's the place between your legs. The seed goes in the same place that the baby comes out. We talked about this before." We've talked about it a lot, because this summer all we talk about is sex and death, something I'll regard with unexpected nostalgia when we reach the next of humankind's compelling topics: excrement.

As I braid, my fingers encounter something soft and slightly flabby just behind Sarah's right ear. A kernel of corn, I think. Every night in the country we've eaten corn, and the children attack it messily, shearing the bright-yellow buttons off the cob with their sharp little teeth so that half of them drop into their laps and onto the floor. I hold the unfinished braid in my left hand and search through Sarah's hair with my right. I've found corn kernels in the couch and in the beds—even in their shoes. The thing on Sarah's scalp is the size of a large kernel and has a stale, liverish yellow color, but it doesn't brush away. I bend over to look more closely. It's a tick, so engorged that its color has gone from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brown to yellow: it has swallowed so much blood that it is pale with intemperance.

I drop the hair I'm holding. Involuntarily, my hand rushes to cover my mouth in a cinematic gesture of shock and revulsion, one I find absurd even in its helplessness. Sarah is engrossed in watching the woodchuck that lives by the compost heap—he's dragging off one of last night's corncobs—so I have a moment to collect myself in the bathroom before I have to gather what I need: tweezers, hydrogen peroxide, cotton balls.

Sarah's hair hangs to her waist and naturally attracts trouble: burrs and gum and pine tar and glue. There's not much that hasn't got stuck in it before. So why am I on my knees on the bath mat, tears dripping into my lap? "Don't be silly!" I would say if it had been Sarah who began to cry. "You're a big girl."

In the cluttered bathroom, toys and toiletries strewn over the floor, my three-year-old son looks up from his clandestine occupations. I can see only one of his eyes behind the big Superman mask he's wearing, its eyeholes cut too far apart to accommodate both of his eyes simultaneously. Seeing that I'm too preoccupied to scold or impede him, he returns with satisfaction to unfolding the towels, all of which he dumps into the damp bathtub.

By the window, Sarah is standing still. Her hair has fallen back over the tick, hiding it, and her face is rapt and beautiful, bathed in clear morning light. I move behind her and, with the tweezers, part her hair to expose the tick.

"Mom!" she wails. I have the tweezers clenched on what looks like the head of the tick and I'm pulling hard, bracing myself with my left hand planted securely against the crown of my daughter's head. But the tick is not letting go; its hold is preternaturally fierce. Just inside the grip of the metal pincers, the bloated bag of the tick's body seeps blood. Sarah's A-positive life wells up around the eight flailing legs of the tick. I pull harder, and the legs stop moving. They stiffen, as if with resolve. I twist it a little, hoping to loosen the animal's jaws or fangs or mandibles—whatever mechanism it has for holding on so tightly. My hand is slick with sweat, the tweezers begin to slip in my fingers.

"Mom! Mom! Mom!" my daughter cries. What could have possessed her mother, she must wonder, to turn a morning braid into this torment?

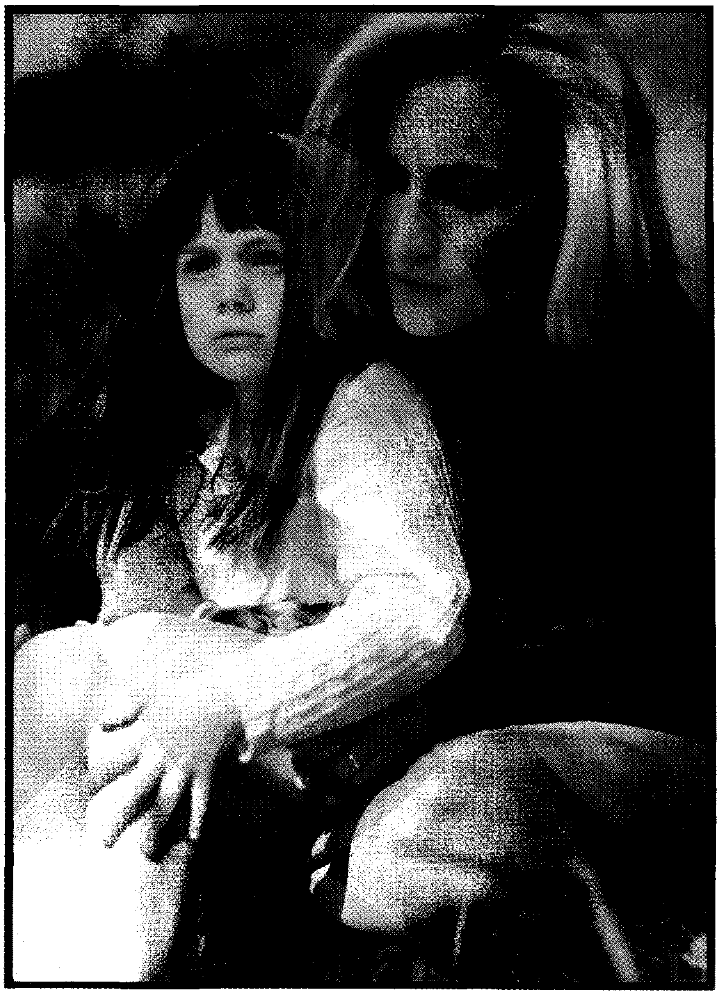
"I'm sorry, sweetie," I say, my voice unnaturally chipper. "There's something stuck in your hair. I just have to get it out."

Don't pull the body off the head! Don't pull the body off the head! I tell myself. Sarah struggles against my left hand, which still holds her skull tightly, and against my thighs and pelvis, which pin her to the windowsill so she cannot escape. If she gets away, she'll go under the bed or hide in the deep, out-of-reach corner of the linen closet, the way she does when she gets a scrape and I go after her with the disinfectant. She isn't weirdly, improbably stoic like her little brother, now standing silent in the doorway between bathroom and bedroom, staring at the two of us. Sarah regards most parental interventions as acts of unwarranted aggression.

The tick comes free, and she collapses sobbing on the bed. "I hate you!" she screams, choking on tears.

In the bathroom I dump the toothbrushes from their mug and drop the tick inside. I debate whether to show my daughter the animal and vindicate my behavior or to protect her from the knowledge of the vileness of ticks. Sarah is in one of her frightened periods. She is afraid of things she knows—fire, dogs, spiders, worms, candle smoke, and vaccinations—and of things of which she has heard but of whose horror she cannot quite conceive: earthquakes, vampire bats, and appendicitis. Wherever we go—her grandmother's, the beach, the supermarket, or, as we did one week at the end of winter, Florida—she asks, hesitating distrustfully before disembarking from car or train or bus or plane, "Are there earthquakes here?"

Already Sarah suspects that grownups lie to protect her from her fears—when they aren't lying to trick her into obedience—and she considers their answers to her questions darkly, her small eyebrows meeting in fierce appraisal. I decide to show her the tick, but when she looks into the mug she's unimpressed and scowls at me. I have to sit on my daughter to clean the tick bite with peroxide, which foams around the small, bloody place on her scalp. Her heel goes into my crotch with angry force. She calls me a witch and says that I am ugly and *spiteful*, a word I threw at her just last night. Sarah will spend the rest of the morning putting on puppet shows for her little brother. In each production, the witch puppet will be killed by Red Riding Hood: once by fire, twice by drowning, and many times by



Mother and daughter, Kathryn and Sarah Harrison.
Photograph by Mark Lyon.

being plunged to her death from a cliff provided by a staircase behind the theatre.

In another part of the house, I pursue my own drama. The tick lies on its back on the bottom of the blue toothbrush mug. If I discount the mouth and legs, its body's shape and color really are exactly those of a large, stale kernel of corn, a resemblance I find repellent.

Fat with greed, the tick moves its legs with languid strokes of gluttony, as if it were swimming slowly in my child's warm blood. I thought that in removing it I had dealt the tick a mortal wound, because when I squeezed and pulled, a red bead of blood—Sarah's—formed bright on its dull underside. But the blood it lost seems now to have been reabsorbed, sucked back in through the little pore that surrendered it.

Under the tick's back, cloudy stains of toothpaste render its imprisonment in the blue china mug absurdly celestial; and this, along with the delighted, drunken motions of the animal's legs, makes me cruel as well as angry. I flip on the overhead light, a collective three hundred watts that reveal the striations on the tick's body. They look like flattened pleats, places where, accordionlike, its body expanded as its hunger was satisfied. *How will I kill it? How will I torture it?* I think.

On the shelf above the toilet are manicure tools in a red leather case, each implement secured under a tiny girdle of red elastic—a long-ago present from my mother. I select a shiny, stainless-steel wand, a genteel device for nudging back cuticles. When I press the tip of it into the tick, the metal descends into the strangely leathery button of the thing. The tick, motionless, doesn't betray any suffering. I push harder, feeling sick to my stomach. Perhaps I should just drown it in rubbing alcohol, I think. But I'm committed to the idea of punishment. Vengeance makes little sense against a tiny adversary that may not even register its pain, but it is what I want.

We received a set of steak knives as a wedding gift and never used them. Heavy-handled, with blades as narrow as stilettos', the knives are dangerously unbalanced. *I will poke the tip of one of them into the tick,* I think, moving tentatively toward the kitchen, the mug held gingerly out from my side. *I will stick the point of the knife into that place where the blood oozed out before, that sort of tick asshole.* Or I could pull out the legs. Or cut them off with the scalpel-like knife. But, I think, standing in the quiet kitchen, those knives aren't in the drawer, are they? No, they're in one of the cryptically marked cartons in the basement. This is our first summer in the country house, and I have yet to move our things into their proper places.

I shake the mug, and the tick bounces around inside like a bean. It draws its legs in tightly against its liverish sides. A tick is not an insect, I recall from high-school invertebrate biology. A tick has eight legs and is related to spiders and crabs. A tick wants blood more than anything, I know, and as I say the words to myself, as I articulate the tick's longing, I understand what I myself want: to make it bleed, to make it surrender what it stole from my child. It's not that I demand this creature's imagined remorse, but what was Sarah's must be returned. A nervous, cool dread uncoils within me.

There's no point in tearing through all those boxes for the steak knives, so I select another kitchen tool, a mysterious implement that resembles an attenuated nutpick. Whatever it is and wherever it came from, I've never had need of it before and won't mind discarding it after this one profane use.

I cut off the first segment of the tick's right foreleg, my determined barbarism making my scalp tighten. I put the pick down, my hand straying unconsciously to the place above my right ear, touching the spot on my own head where the tick bit Sarah. When I pick up the implement again, I'm not aware of my hand shaking, but the tip of the pick wavers so that it's hard to pin down the rest of the leg and separate it from the body. The tick draws its other limbs into its sides, curls them so tightly that they look like the dots on a ladybug. Lying beside its own amputated joints, it betrays no pain or dismay, just the resolve that other legs will not be so mistreated.

When the phone rings, I almost drop the mug. "*What?*" I say.

"Kathryn?" says my husband, at work in the city.

"Yes," I say. "Hi."

"What's up?"

"Nothing. I found a tick on Sarah."

"Oh," he says, sounding unconcerned. "A big one or a little one?"

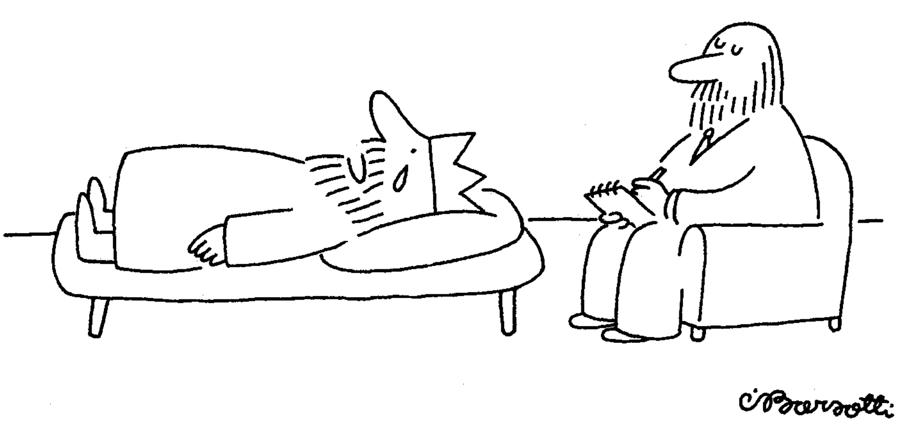
"Big."

"Well, that's good, right? It's the little ones that are bad."

"The Lyme ones are little," I concede. "But they're all bad."

My husband tells a tick-related anecdote about his boyhood dog. Understanding that this is intended to relieve my anxiety, I pretend that it does. I tilt the mug back and forth, rolling my wrist so that the tick makes slow circles around the perimeter of the bottom. What is happening inside that tiny, secret brain? Dizziness? Fear? Pain? At least one of these, I hope. I stop swirling the tick in

"From here we continue on foot."



"Albert the Great—what a joke."

• •

the mug and check to see if it's still moving. It is.

I remember suddenly where I'll find the steak knives. They didn't fit into the last kitchen-miscellany box, so I put them with the books. I slipped the knives between Garrison Keillor and Milan Kundera, a slot where they seemed, during a punch-drunk phase of packing, to make an apt transition—Keillor, Knives, Kundera—dividing the two kinds of humor. In the box is also the unreadably compact, two-volume edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, still in its dark-blue case, which includes a drawer with a magnifying glass.

"So," my husband says. "How's it going? You working on your book?"

"Fine," I say. "Yes," I lie. We talk for a few more minutes, and then I go down to the basement, leaving the cordless phone on the stairs, where I won't remember to find it the next time it rings. I tear open the tape on the carton. The steak knives are there, just where I pictured them. I think for a moment and then slide out the little drawer of the O.E.D.'s case and take the magnifying glass as well.

The tick is using its last leg to cling to the blade of a steak knife, a surface that the magnifying glass reveals to be utterly smooth, lacking any hold for purchase. The tick trembles in the air but magically does not fall. I am pitting myself against a tiny creature of pure instinct, a button programmed for survival, a blot of life unaffected by hope or fear, a fleck of animate energy with an admirable reluctance to die.

We must have rubbing alcohol somewhere, I know we do, but I can't find it, so from the cupboard I get a bottle of white Island rum, a gift from my husband's parents, recently returned from St. Croix. I twist off the sticky lid and pour the heavy liquid out over the tick, and it has a strangely clarifying effect. The rum brings the tick horribly close to my eye, so close that the bloated gut seems planetary in its hugeness. Yes, huge: there is nothing bigger in the world than this tick stuffed with its minute apparatuses of consumption and digestion.

The surface of the gut consists of gradations of pigment, variances both subtle and extreme. I'm mesmerized by the tick's belly, its topography of shadow and light. The tiny orb becomes, suddenly, a moon. One smudge unmistakably recalls the largest of the lunar landscape's shadows, the Sea of Tranquillity, or whatever it's called—Sea of Longing, of Lonesomeness. All those dim, blue bodies of unwater. When long-dead astronomers peered through their antique, imperfect telescopes, they thought of water: *Mare Undarum*, Sea of Waves. *Mare Serenitatis*, Sea of Fair Weather. But I always get the names wrong. Sea of Loneliness, I think, Sea of Trepidation, of Solemnity. My husband shakes his head. "Why such sad names?" he says.

The rum has dissolved the toothpaste, and the tick floats in a blue the color of a suburban pool. Its one remaining leg curls and uncurls, making a tiny hook, like a beckoning black finger. What passes for its head has gained complexity and even features in the bath of rum. It looks wise and ancient, innocent by virtue of its primitiveness. It looks like the head on a pre-Columbian sculpture squatting under thick museum glass. Like an icon, the tick cares nothing for its incidental, man-made environment. Its kind existed centuries before me and will persist for centuries hence. Ticks evolved to their present state as soon as there was warm-blooded life to support them. And why should they change? In response to what threat? I have taken more than an hour not yet to kill one.

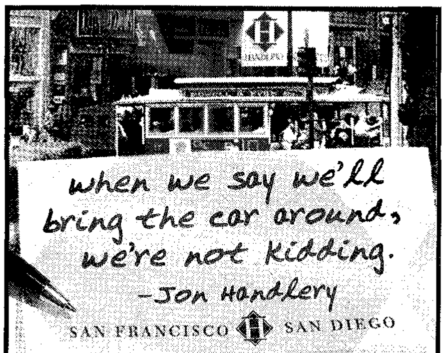
Does it breathe? It survives, missing seven legs and submerged in the alcohol. Why is its desire to live so unbeatable?

I consider whether I ought to push the blade into the tick's belly while it lies on its back, aiming for that tiny anus or whatever that little hole is, or do what seems less grisly and shove the blade through its back. I swirl the rum in the mug, and the tick turns from its back to its belly. Dorsal, ventral. Decent words of erudition. Civilized words from twelfth-grade science-class dissections of frogs, rats, worms.

I pin the tick belly down. The blade skids off until I lodge it in one of the creases left from its expandable pleats. Surprisingly, pressure does not rupture what's left of the body; instead, an elegant silver stream of bubbles erupts from each of the seven places where I tore a leg off. I push the knife harder, and it goes in at last with a tiny pop. But still no blood. I withdraw the knife's blade and use the handle to press on the tick until a fat, black bubble—of what? intestine?—exudes through the hole I made in the tick's skin. Its exoskeleton.

I am waiting for Sarah's blood to drift into the rum, to waft pinkly over the tiny corpse. The reappearance of my daughter's stolen life will qualify as redemption. That's why I have performed this abomination. But, though I have made ten holes in the tick with the fine point of the blade, and from each of them pressed a tarry bubble, I have not drawn blood. The tick's leg curls and uncurls, each tiny jointed segment beautiful in its persistent perfection. The body is a mess. Pulped. Nothing left to plunder. All of what the tick drank from my daughter is digested, evidently; Sarah's blood has turned to excrement before I could reclaim it.

In the bathroom, I consider the dismembered submarine carnage of tiny, torn legs and what seem like trailing intestines that undulate in the rum. Cloudy now instead of clear, the spirit reveals my cruelty as a dulling process: one of obfuscation. I lift the toilet lid and pour the rum into the water. The pieces of tick sink, sliding slowly down the concave incline of the white bowl. The tick has won. ♦



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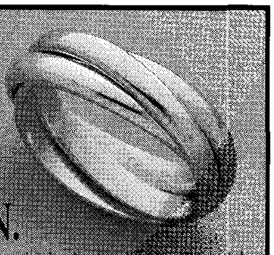

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PARIS JOURNAL

COUTURE SHOCK

Scenes from the fall-fashion collections.

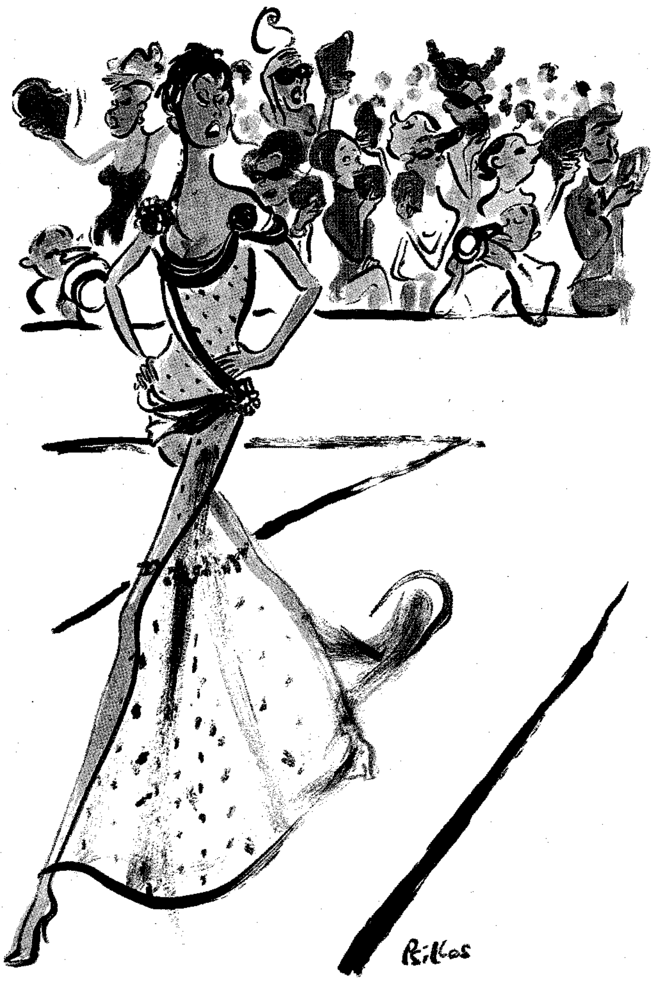
BY ADAM GOPNIK

I SUPPOSE you could say that my introduction to the rites and spells of Parisian haute couture occurred early on a Sunday morning, at the Valentino show, when the ladies in the front row suddenly, and pretty much in unison, folded their programs over and began to fan themselves ferociously with the gold-and-brown paper. The Valentino show was being held at nine-thirty in the morning for reasons of protocol so complicated that they resembled one of those nineteenth-century diplomatic negotiations, like the Schleswig-Holstein question, comprehensible to only three people in Europe. The cream of the fashion press had turned up anyway, although Anna Wintour and Suzy Menkes and the rest had the pained, *aren't*-you-a-clever-boy-to-wake-me-up-this-early smiles otherwise seen only on parents of two-year-olds. The music had begun, Stella Tennant had come out (head angled, shoulders thrown back, hips a little forward, rolling the works) in ivory wool-and-silk chevron trousers with two patch pockets, an ivory blouse with matching lace, and a beige cashmere shawl bordered in lace, looking game despite the hour and all that lace. Then the ladies in the front row, the rich clients, began to fan. They fanned hard, expertly—my God, it's hot in here—just the way veteran *défilé* watchers always do. And this was odd, because it was freezing cold inside the Salon Opéra at the Grand Hôtel: the coldest July in Paris anyone could recall; cassoulet and topcoat weather. But the ladies fanned as they always do, in the gasping heat of July at the collections.

I turned to a friend sitting next to me, a French television journalist, and directed at her my version of the French shrug-and-frown that means, Why on earth? She, in turn, made the French O with her mouth that means, Please, my friend, discard this elaborate pretense of naïveté. Then she shrugged, too. "They are at the collections. It is July. They fan," she said. She thought for a moment. "It is a reflex. We watch, therefore we fan. No. I fan, therefore I am." Then she looked around the Salon and made the encompassing shrug-and-pout-and-flex-your-hands-from-the-wrist French gesture that in the context meant that the apparent absurdity of the act of fanning yourself in the cold is no more absurd than the whole enterprise of travelling to Paris to look at clothes that you will never wear, displayed on models to whom you bear no resemblance, in order to help a designer get people who will never attend shows like this to someday buy a perfume or a scarf that will give them the consoling illusion that they have a vague association with the kind of people who do attend shows like this—even though the people who attend shows like this are the kind who fan themselves against July heat that happens not to exist. It is these formulations—packed tight with contradictions that spiral around, turn in on themselves, bite their own tails, and eventually come out dressed in taffeta and lace tulle—that give haute couture its charm, or, anyway, help it cast its spell.

Participating in the haute couture is more like entering a yacht in the America's Cup than it is like opening a Seventh Avenue showroom: the collections are overseen by the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne, which demands, among other things, that its members maintain a working atelier in Paris, and put on a show each season of no fewer than fifty costumes each. Belonging is an expensive, exacting business, and every year one more house just drops out. This season, there were sixteen shows—about a thousand outfits, from Stella's silky pants to the wedding dress at Saint Laurent. First an event and then a theme dominated the five days of the shows. The event was the separation of Gianfranco Ferrè as head designer from the House of Dior, which was significant because it threw a major house into a "crisis," and the theme was the crisis of haute couture. Of course, haute couture is always in crisis, like Cyprus or the New York theatre. But by now the crisis has become almost existential; not even a hit will help. Even very, very rich women don't buy bespoke clothes in Paris anymore, and the widely understood, though never openly articulated, justification for losing money in couture for the past twenty years or so—the loss-leader justification—no longer works. By now, most fashionable people feel, the average woman who buys, say, a box of Pierre Cardin handkerchiefs is probably buying them less because of the glamorous association of Pierre Cardin haute couture than because of the glamorous association of Pierre Cardin socks and Pierre Cardin sunglasses. (As a consequence, Pierre Cardin, who seems to have figured this out, doesn't even show his haute-couture line in the *défilés*.)

Fashionable people have two contradictory theories to explain the persistence of couture despite its troubles—theories usually mentioned in succession and often in the same sentence. The first—a kind of Tang-and-Teflon explanation, which is promoted by the Chambre—is that haute couture is the R. & D. wing of the fashion business, an investment in its future, since the "techniques" and "styles" that the designers wheel out today will somehow affect the kind of clothes that people wear tomorrow. (Veteran explainers offering this view can make it sound as though the *défilés* were taking place in a particle accelerator.) The other, contradictory explanation is that haute couture is the living memory of French fashion, where vanishing standards of workmanship, craftsmanship, and imagination are kept alive as a necessary act of filial piety. When you point out that both these explanations can't be true at the same time, you generally get in response a kind of Paris Zen. "Ah, you are right. Both things cannot be true at once. That is the point of haute couture," one fashion prince explained to me. Then he walked off seraphically.



The haute couture incontestably remains a rite. The press scribbles. The photographers hoot. The ladies fan.

DEMETRIOS PSILLOS

THE haute couture remains a rite. There are the photographers, who push to get inside, and who form, on their bleachers, a little island of happy heterosexual lust amid two seas of becalmed aestheticism; they're the only free men at the collections—they whoop, whistle, and call out to the models anything they feel like calling out to the models. ("They could come out dressed in paper bags for all I care," one photographer said that morning as he looked over the Valentino program. "Well, *plastic* bags, anyway.") Then, there are the models themselves, who can undress and dress again so quickly that when the show is over they climb out of the last evening dress and are on the street, wearing jeans and T-shirts and Prada knapsacks, getting a taxi before the applause has stopped. And there are the fashionable people, lining up in order not to be allowed in. (The shows never start on time, or near it, but everybody comes to the security desk and waves the invitation anyway.)

It's the clothes, of course, that differ from show to show. At Valentino, the collection soon settles into a look—clothes in colors that the regular guy might describe as "sort of brown," although a fashionable person might call them chestnut, chocolate, beige, coffee, and bronze. The sequence of styles is fixed. Day wear comes first, then what are still called, touchingly, cocktail dresses, and then evening wear. Usually, a wedding dress comes last, but Valentino replaced it with a long red chiffon sheath. As the models come out, almost everyone in the room begins one task of translation or another. The press has the simple job of translating the descriptions of the clothes, which are written in fashionese, into ordinary language. Valentino's program was relatively taciturn—Hemingway-like, compared to most. Lacroix, for example, later in the week showed a " 'cold dawn' shot razimir spiral sheath dress with 'apricot' and 'melon' kick pleat"). Still, even Valentino's "Mordoré silk laminated ottoman pinstriped pantsuit, gold lace polo T-shirt, black cashmere shawl bordered in gold lace" became, in the margin of one journalist's program, "beige slacks." The garment-industry people are looking for something—a range of colors, a shape, a new line—that they can translate from cashmere and laminated ottoman into cottons and synthetics, and sell. They sketch shapes, which to the unpracticed eye all look more or less the same. A tight bodice with a big skirt represents evening wear; a short, tight jacket with big pleated flowing pants stands in for day wear. The few unattached, noncommercial, nonbuying spectators in the room are waiting for what they call "a couture moment"—a moment, the newcomer is assured, that is roughly equivalent to the moment in opera when the clouds of shlock lift and something crazily artificial becomes transporting.

Only the top fashion editors—at whom all the expense is in a way directed—cannot sketch or make notes, for fear of seeming rude. They leave that to their underlings, and try to look interested and amused as each costume passes by. A haute-couture *défilé* is an oddly heart-lifting occasion, inflected with hope. The fashion editors are hoping that one of the models' dresses will give them a point, a theme, something to write about. The fashion merchants are hoping that one of the models' dresses, suitably adapted, will make them a fortune. The aficionados are hoping that one of the models' dresses will supply a couture moment. The photographers are hoping that one of the models' dresses will fall off. The press scribbles. The photographers hoot. The ladies fan.

MOST of the collections are shown either in the ballroom of the Hôtel InterContinental, which is long and narrow and mock Grand Siècle, or, like the Valentino show, in the ballroom of the Grand Hôtel, which is high and circular and Second Empire. On Sunday afternoon, though, every fashionable person has to find a taxi or get a lift all the way out to the periphery of Paris, where John Galliano is showing his fall collection for Givenchy at the Stade Français—the old French indoor-sports arena. What no one at Givenchy has considered, though, is that holding the show in a stadium means holding the waiting period before the show outside the stadium—in the open air, where few fashionable people are inclined to spend a lot of the day and, as it happens on this Sunday, in a steady Paris drizzle, too.

Things get ugly fast. "It is insupportable!" one distinguished-looking dowager is crying as the rain pelts her perfectly constructed face. "I have been a Givenchy client for decades, and now I am being made to stand outside, exposed to the wind, naked to the rain!"

"In the rain! *In the rain!*" the lady next to her cries out, and she goes on, "I, too, have been a client for a period of time." She resists saying "decades," despite its obvious pathetic force; she is a little younger than the first lady. "The thing is insupportable."

"No! It is worse! It is a scandal!" the first lady cries, definitively. "Insupportable" is a bitter word in French, but "scandal" is a fighting one. Even the Givenchy guards at the chain-link gate, in their double-breasted jackets, are beginning to get uneasy. When the crowd gathered outside the Bastille, the trouble began after some old lady said the thing was a scandal.

At this point, the fashion editor André Leon Talley comes up, pushing people aside on his way to the ritual "No, you see, *I've* been invited. What! You mean these people have, too?" moment. André Leon Talley is a big guy, and for a second or two it seems likely that the guards are going to let him in. This makes the dowagers, standing behind me, plain crazy, and they charge, blind to the consequences. We are storming the Givenchy gates when the guards just give way: they open the gate and let everyone walk across the lawn toward the stadium. We file in, feeling vindicated, and take our seats. At least thirty more minutes pass before anything happens.

The Givenchy show, appropriately, takes as its subject the ever popular fashion themes of decapitation and mass murder. Inside the stadium, Galliano has constructed a Fragonard-like forest of feathery trees and dark ferns. Then, instead of sending the models one by one down a runway, he sends them out in groups, to wander around the artificial forest. The setting is meant to recall eighteenth-century French aristocratic life and the dresses what became of it. The dress worn by Inès de la Fressange, for instance, is frankly described as an "ivory lace Empire Trench with blood pre-guillotine velvet sash." All the girls are meant to look as if they were on their way to the tumbrels, and, in fact, the Revolutionary-era Empire dresses, with their long, columnar lines and soft, clinging bodices, in beaded ivories and reds and champagnes and olives and emeralds, *are* quite unreal in their loveliness. They are by far the most memorable "pure" design of the week, and, toned down and deblooded, the obvious tip to become this autumn's look.

HAUTE couture, everyone says, no longer has much to do with what normal women normally wear. The besetting sin of haute couture, though, is not unreality but corniness: not that it looks like things no women would actually wear but that it looks exactly like what your Aunt Ida *always* wears "for best"—that shiny black thing, say, covered with sequins and accompanied by a little shoulder-hugging jacket.

This is a thought that occurs on Monday afternoon, at the Ungaro show—a collection of pants suits and long dresses so standard and uneventful that it gives you a lot of time to think. There is a reason, you realize, that even women who could afford to do not wear what the models in Ungaro are wearing—dresses of floor-length flowing lace. The reason is that fancy clothes look fancy, and fanciness now looks primitive. So many of the clothes, in their elaborately ostentatious materials, just seem regressive, over-rich, brutally obvious. In feeling, they date back to a time when a complicated display of expensive materials was meant to be crushing evidence of wealth. Now wealth, wanting to crush, likes subtler evidence; that's why more wealthy women buy Brice Marden squares than haute-couture evening clothes.

Ungaro, though, has intelligently taken his show off the runway, too, and put it on the floor—in principle, so that you can see the detail work on the clothes, but with the side effect that you can also see a lot of the models inside them. None of the big-name girls are here—not Linda or Naomi or Claudia—but it is the B, or non-name, models who are the most thrilling to look at. This is partly because the name models are phoning it in: Linda Evangelista, at the Givenchy show, had exactly the smug "I don't have to do this for a living anymore" look that Shecky

Greene and Buddy Hackett used to have when they "dropped in" on Merv Griffin. The B-list models, on the other hand, *work:* they throw out their hips, they flirt with their eyes, and when the photographers call out to them to smolder they smolder. A great deal of time is spent—by regular guys, anyway—explaining to themselves why the haute-couture models are not really as desperately beautiful as you might think when they are even more beautiful than you can imagine. The trick—or, to put it another way, the consolation—is that their beauty has become so familiar that it is not so much a commodity as a commonplace. Looking at Kate Moss modelling Givenchy, you don't think, There's a heartbreakingly beautiful girl. Instead, you just think, There's Kate Moss. The projected fantasy bangs up not against her inaccessibility but, paradoxically, against her familiarity. She offers not a limitless horizon of love and elegance and great clothes but the reality of a known life. (You would have to avoid talking about Johnny Depp. You would have to tell her how thin she looks, or, rather—for it is the New Kate—how zaftig.)

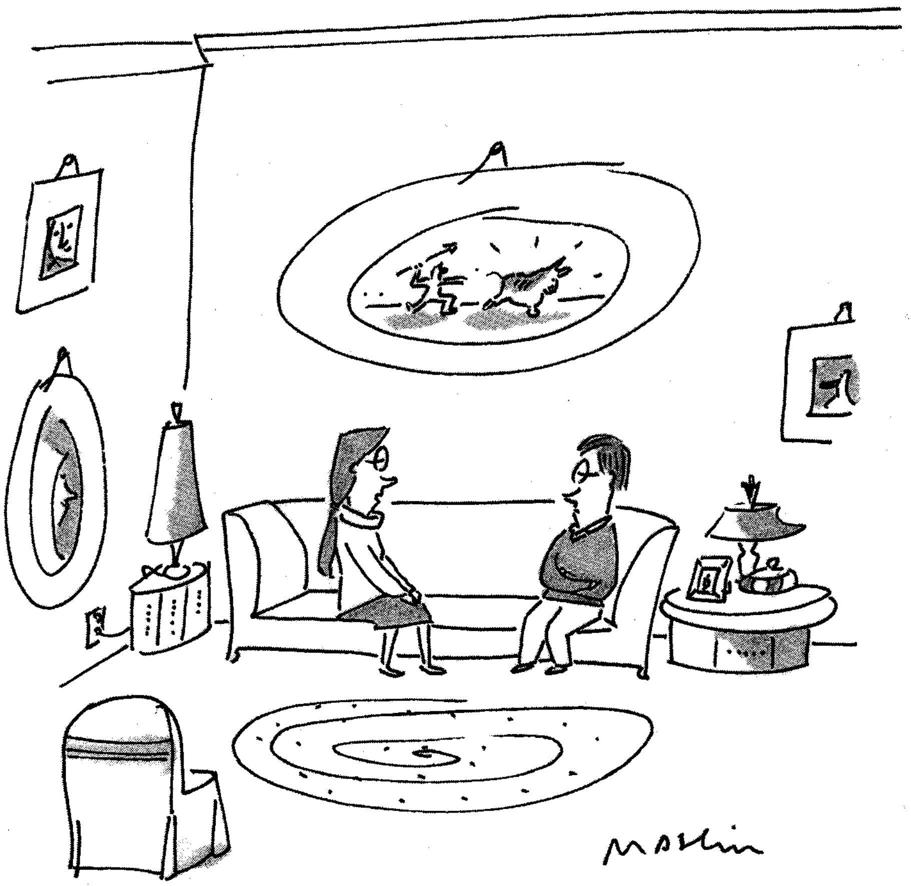
But they are perfect! A twelve-year-old American boy who was visiting Paris that week had come equipped with his skateboard, and, to his shock, discovered in Paris not a skateboard hell but a paradise of broad, flat avenues and, at the Place du Trocadéro, vast, flat concrete plazas. "How do you find Paris?" he was asked. His eyes went round and reverent. "*Smooth*," he said. I find the models smooth, too.

One new girl in particular is so perfectly beautiful that she seems a composite of various imaginary smoothnesses. I later learn that her name is Honor Fraser, that she is English, and that she is being tipped by the fancy as the Next Great Model: she will be Miss England in next year's Pirelli calendar. I feel like a novice horseplayer who has just picked the Kentucky Derby winner.

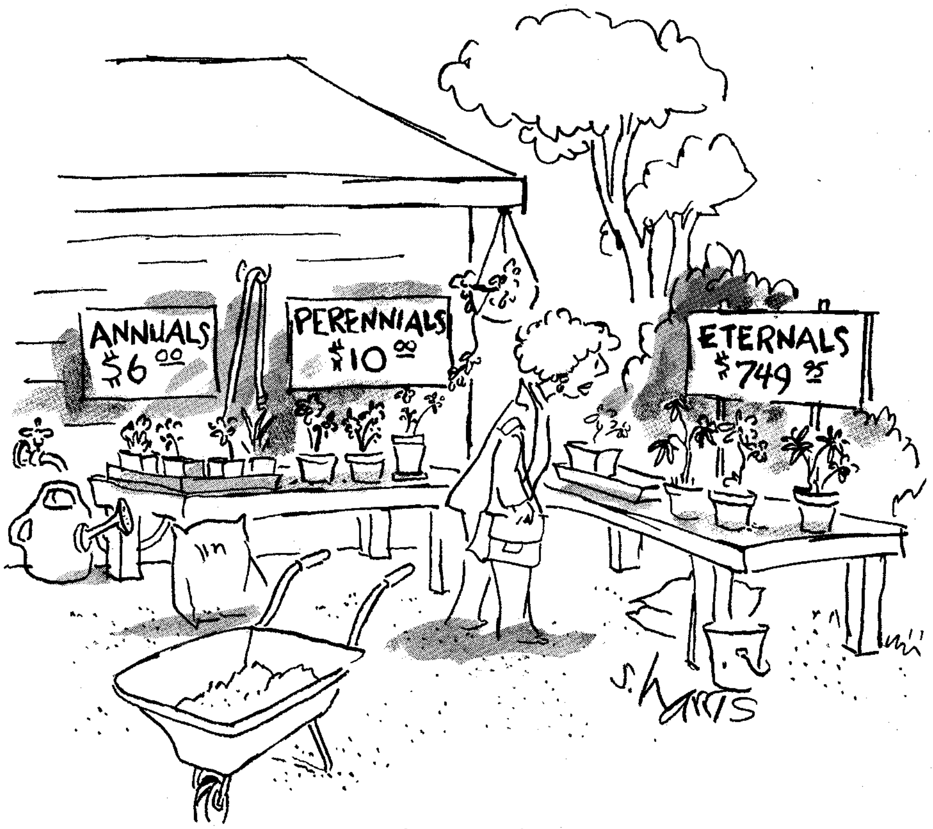
When the shows were over, I spoke with her about what it is like to be on the runway, instead of watching what happens there. She turned out to be a poised student of her own craft. "I love modelling couture," she said, with a passionate eagerness. "It's the only pure expression in fashion—the one part of the fashionable world where there are no commercial compromises at all. There's something terribly moving about being an element of it—being its vehicle. The purity and the exactitude that the designers devote to every tiny detail of your clothing and accessories, as though they were working from some image deep in their minds, which they're trying to approximate with you, the way people exhaust themselves in pursuit of an ideal—it's really very moving. It's quite extraordinary to be backstage, being made up for two hours, being transformed from who you are into this ideal of beauty that the designer keeps in the back of his mind.

"I love couture modelling, too, because you have such a pure feeling of control and power when you're out there. For a tiny period of time—three or four seconds—you have the chance to hold the entire room. This may seem like a strange comparison, but I'm fascinated by comedy, and I imagine that modelling couture must feel very much like being a comedian—it's just you out there, having to win over an audience, with nothing except yourself and your attitude to do it. And then I, for one, find the clothes so lovely—those Valentino colors that aren't quite colors and yet register as though they were. I feel lucky to have been a part of it." I had never before come across someone who was articulate and knowing about her craft, was big enough to start at power forward, and looked great in a black velvet military coat with rhinestone buttons, black satin trousers, and a black silk top embroidered with black jet. (She had been wearing that, for Valentino, the first time I saw her.)

TELL about the pathetic collections. A certain number of the collections seem intended to be pathetic. Olivier Lapidus's is my specimen pathetic collection. The house is full, and the B-list girls do the modelling, and Olivier, who is the son of the designer Ted, looks like a very nice guy. But it is held at the Carrousel du Louvre, a place designed specially to hold collections—it is big and well lit and clean—which



"With the understanding that it's strictly on a trial basis, I'd like you out of my life forever."



means, naturally, that absolutely nobody wants to show there. Olivier Lapidus comes onstage to point out that his collection is a mixture of past, present, and future, and includes the first solar-panelled jacket ever made. He shows it off. You can control the solar panels, turning the heat up or down, and it also has a built-in plug that could "*brancher*" you right into the Internet, the first haute-couture garment equipped to go on line. The poor model has to take the plug out of the pocket and show it to the audience. Then you hear the theme from "Star Trek." Nobody knows which way to look.

TUESDAY night is Christian Lacroix. The show is held in the ballroom of the Grand Hôtel, and it is by far the most intently attended *défilé* I have seen yet; even Mme. Chirac is here. Lacroix is of the moment. I associate his clothes with the tasteless things about the eighties, the Ivana Trump era—clothes to wear for the big settlement. Tonight, when the lights go down, Linda Evangelista comes out in the ugliest dress I have ever seen. Even the program's words can't disguise its ugliness: "silk-crêpe dress stamped with a mauve-and-ochre-green 'reptile' design." I am settling in for a good long bath of contempt.

But then something happens. First, the music begins to take hold. In most of the collections, the music is either generic "sophisticated" soprano-and-synthesizer pop—the kind you associate with the singer Sade—or classical chestnuts, like Albinoni and Mozart. Lacroix, though, has had someone (the program credits a Laurent Godard) with an uncanny eclectic ear arrange his music. We begin with the breathless, chimelike sounds of the Swedish group the Cardigans and switch to Joe Jackson, and then, without missing a beat, land in a Bellini aria. Lacroix works through his day wear and moves into the cocktail dresses and then the evening wear. In the program he announces that he has been spending all his time lately "with Vermeer." He seems to have taken a wrong turn in the museum, for what you see is Goya: Goya's duchesses, in their mantillas and black satin dresses, but wildly remade, as though for a Balanchine ballet of the life of Goya. There are lots of satins and silks in dark colors—navy-blue satin and vermillion satin and black chiffon. The layering is ecclesiastical. For once, the program description actually describes the clothes: a long, lined black crêpe sweater-dress tucked up over a crêpe underskirt with a fuchsia faille bustle at the back, accented by a pistachio satin knot. The crepuscular colors mute the ostentation, so that it doesn't look like ostentation at all but, rather, like art, like old painting. The music turns to the Beatles' baroque period: the string part from "Eleanor Rigby," and then a long cello-and-harp version of "For No One." The lovely sad yet modern tunes, the twilight, and the dresses themselves create, against all odds and probabilities, something touching, and even—Honor Fraser's word is right—moving. The dresses aren't really dresses at all; they are little buildings of crêpe and silk and taffeta. The girls look out from them, like Spanish ladies looking out from a second-floor window. When a model named Victoria appears in a black satin corset with Elizabethan sleeves of tulle and worn over a deep-lavender-blue skirt flecked with black lace—she looks like an actress dressed up as Viola for an impossibly beautiful production of "Twelfth Night"—the audience applauds, genuinely, not politely. When Karen Mulder comes out in a silver lace dress with an iced-pearl bodice, I make exclamation points in my program.

It's all too much, and that's where the loveliness—the couture moment—begins. The clothes are extravagant and unreal, but they don't seem camp. They don't seem artificial or out of this world, just symbolic of a common human hope that the world could be something other than it is—younger and more musical and less exhausting and better lit. It proposes that the little moments of seduction on which, when we look back, so much of our life depends could unfold as *formally* as they deserve to, and all dressed up. It is as if we were wishing that the rituals of sex, those moments of painful sizing up, which begin with the thought "That's a nice dress," could pass by more consequentially, slowly—love walking down a runway instead of just meeting you outside the movie theatre.

Couture is a romantic cartoon. It's a caricature of the romantic impulse, with a cartoon's exaggerations but a cartoon's energy and lighthearted poetry, too. The thing you feel in a couture moment isn't "What a wonderful dress," or, as you do with higher kinds of art, "What a good place the world is," but, more simply, "I'm in love." The point of haute couture may be any one of a hundred things, ninety-nine of them sordid or silly, but its subject is women wearing clothes and all the emotion that rises from women wearing clothes. Offering romance in cartoon form, couture helps preserve the habit of romance. The best moments at Lacroix or Givenchy, far from being giddy or empty, were familiar, and held out the promise of the beginning of a whole familiar cycle. Soon the fantasies, translated, will become purchases—This Fall's Dresses—and these will become photographs, the kind you look at five years later (God, that dress is so mid-nineties!) to find that they have become a little piece of your time, a peg to hang a good memory on ("Remember that kind of satiny Lacroix-knockoff thing you had? You looked great in that"). The sequence, one of the last romantic sequences we can count on, starts in these hotels; that they happen to be places where rich ladies cool themselves off in the cold seems a small price to pay to keep that emotion in circulation.

The emotion passes quickly, of course. In a minute, Love walks back up the runway, changes into her jeans and T-shirt, and is on the phone to her agent. Still dazed by Lacroix, I stumbled across one beauty outside the hotel with her cell phone clutched in her hand. I heard her mutter, firmly, "I know I said I'd do it, but I can't. It's only Tuesday, and already I've got taffeta coming out my ass."

YVES SAINT LAURENT, on Wednesday morning, is the last important collection, and the most "classic." Here, for once, is a really well-organized show, where everybody slips inside on time. Lacroix is the haunt of the new, Gaullist French government establishment; Saint Laurent is still the favorite of the old Socialist aristocracy, and they all turn out. Jack Lang, the former culture minister, is here, looking as though he owned the place. (The Socialists loved Saint Laurent because his clothes promised the pleasures of modernity without the sacrifices of modernism: that was the Mitterrand dream.) Saint Laurent just shows Saint Laurent: beautiful clothes that he could have shown in 1980 or 1990 just as well. The music is standard opera arias. Everything gets a hand.

The big news for the photographers is that Claudia Schiffer has come to Y.S.L., having been snubbed by Karl Lagerfeld at Chanel, and she gets the first-desk position. Claudia, though, is not what you would call a team player. Where the other models only occasionally respond to the photographers' pleas for more, Claudia stands at the end of the runway for what seems like ten minutes at a time, making love to every camera in sight. The other girls, held up at the head of the runway and waiting for her to get through, give her exactly the look you see on the face of an impatient commuter at the Holland Tunnel who is stuck in the exact-change lane behind a woman who has entered it on a hunch.

Then the blond, Botticelli-faced Karen Mulder comes out in the costume that every photographer has been dreaming of for years: *robe de soir courte de mousseline et satin noir*—a sheer dark silk nightgown that, for one reason or another, provides an undergarment below but not above. Karen holds one fingertip precisely in front of each breast, demurely, as she walks down the runway. The photographers go crazy. "Karen! Karen!" they moan. "*Give* us something." Karen smiles. Nothing doing. She walks right to the end of the runway—right into the heart of the photographers' lair—smiling, keeping her fingertips in place, not embarrassed but not giving anything away, either, and then she walks right back. The photographers groan, in disbelieving unison, as she disappears. You could have heard them out on the Place Vendôme. "There was a fortune in it for all of us," one of them says mournfully. I notice Claudia, on her way in, giving Karen a look. You have the feeling that Claudia would have dropped her hands, pulled off the gown, and jumped off the runway to autograph the negatives.

Afterward, in the Saint Laurent dressing room, I see that, while every other outfit, on every other girl's card, includes three or four accessories, cover-ups, or undergarments, the *robe de soir*, listed on Karen Mulder's card, is, by design or mistake, all by itself—nothing to help her out at all. For the first time all week, someone had left a fashionable vacuum. She had filled it with her fingertips. ♦

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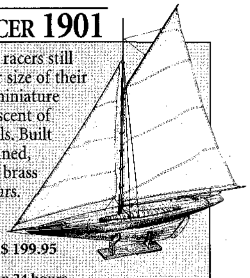

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PRESIDENTIAL CHRONICLES

NIXON UNPLUGGED

How Richard Nixon saw his surprising relationship with Bill Clinton.

BY MONICA CROWLEY

ON July 3, 1990, when I was twenty-one years old, I began work as Richard Nixon's foreign-policy assistant, and I stayed in that job until his death, on April 22, 1994. Surprisingly for a man who had so often been damaged by those he trusted, Nixon trusted me at once. During those four years, I became a professional confidante of a man who for nearly fifty years had influenced American politics and the global balance of power. I worked with him on his last two books, "Seize the Moment" and "Beyond Peace." I travelled with him to Europe and to Asia, where he invited me to attend his private meetings with the heads of state and other leaders. And I listened as he expressed his views about international affairs and world leaders, American politics and policy, Watergate, his own political career, and human nature. He was my mentor, but he was also like a grandfather to me. On nights when the weather was bad, he would often call me to be sure I had arrived home safely.

My association with Nixon began when I was a junior at Colgate University and enrolled in a course in national security and foreign policy. My professor suggested that I read Nixon's "1999: Victory Without War," and, since the book impressed me enormously, I wrote Nixon a letter dealing with the issues he raised in it. Incredibly, his handwritten response included an invitation to visit him at his office in Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey, to discuss foreign-policy issues. During my senior year, we corresponded, and upon my graduation he offered me a job—one of only four staff positions.

Nixon was not only my employer but my guide to American political history. Because I had been granted a rare view of one of the most important figures of the century, I kept a daily diary, of which Nixon was unaware; after each discussion, I recorded his conversation, mood, and personal reflections. His professional and personal disclosures were made in confidence, but with the implicit understanding that they would at some point be recounted. In order to preserve the integrity of the dialogue, I took some notes as the conversations occurred and then reconstructed them on paper immediately afterward. I knew that the best way for Nixon to influence history was to allow him to speak for himself. The quotations herein are Nixon's own words. When William Safire, of the *Times*, encouraged me to write about my experiences with Nixon, in August of 1994, he said, "Nixon knew that when he spoke to you he was speaking to history."

Nixon's experience placed him in a special position to judge leaders who had come before and after him, and I heard his opinions on a wide range of subjects, including the rise of Bill Clinton, with whom he developed a unique relationship in the last years of his life. I was struck by the fact that the youthful Clinton, as an anonymous protester against the Vietnam War, had enraged President Nixon, yet Clinton, as President, was able to bestow a measure of redemption and respect upon the former President.

NIXON'S interest in Clinton began months before the Arkansas governor won his party's nomination. In January of 1992, as the New Hampshire primary approached, Nixon was already paying close attention to Clinton, calling him the "fair-haired boy" of the Democratic Party, and taking note of the rumors of philandering which followed the candidate. Nixon was curious about how damaging such revelations might be to Clinton. "What effect will they have on the voters?" he asked me one day.

"If they are true . . ." I began.

"They are, without question. He established it early on with the media. I would say this: 'Let's not discuss personal lives. There are plenty of issues that concern us in this country; let us focus on those.' If he cannot avoid it, all he has to say is 'My wife and I have had some problems.' I don't know if the media will be satisfied with that. He is a Democrat, though, so they will be more inclined to protect him. What do you think?"

When I replied that it could be a serious liability, he said, "It wasn't for J.F.K. No one knew, because those who did protected him and in some cases pimped for him. I just don't know if there is still a moral majority out there where this even matters anymore. But, in any case, the Democrats are defusing it now because they believe he's their best hope. The Republicans could bring it up later, when he's the front-runner or nominee, and force a Gary Hart-type withdrawal. But who knows? That type of scandal may be a nothing thing these days."

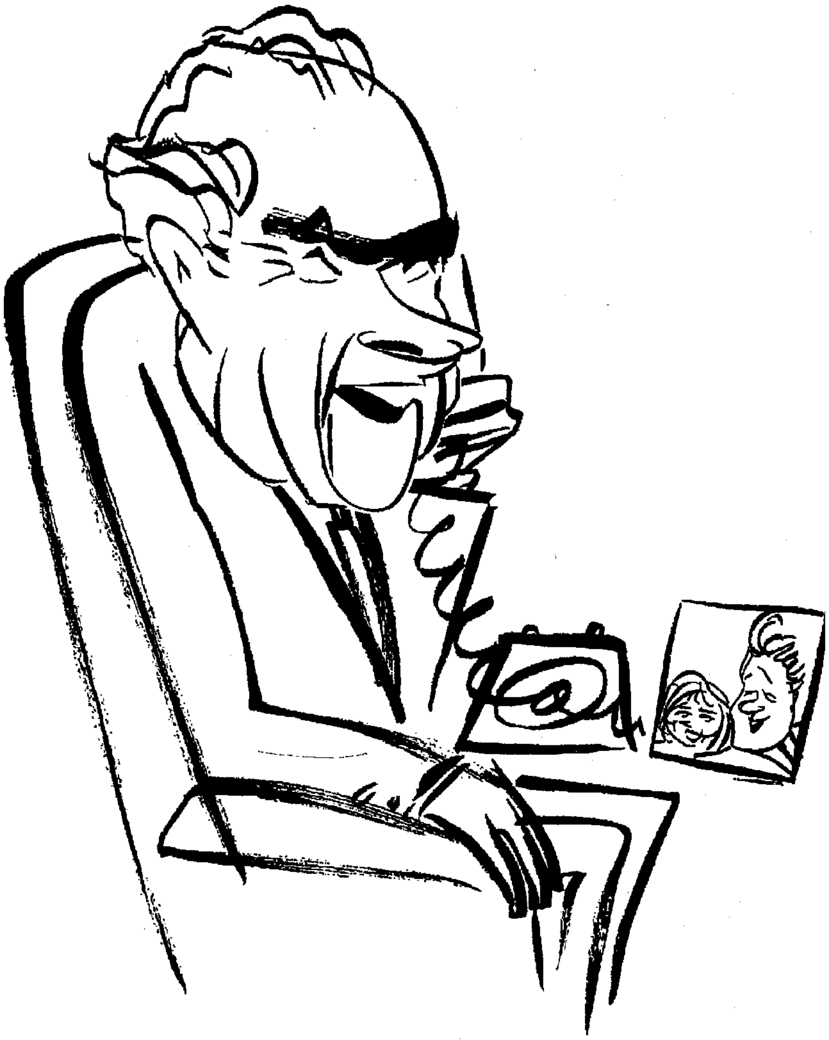
On Sunday, January 26th, Nixon watched in disgust as Bill and Hillary Clinton took advantage of the large post-Super Bowl audience to give a live interview to "60 Minutes." Clinton denied having an affair with Gennifer Flowers and admitted only to marital "problems." It was a delicate balancing act that amused Nixon. He talked with me after the broadcast. "I just got off the phone with Julie"—his daughter, Julie Nixon Eisenhower. "She couldn't believe the whole thing. Would you believe what we just saw? He was so defensive—he looked like a Kennedy!" He laughed. "You know, Clinton's wife was a lawyer on the Watergate committee, so that tells us where she's coming from. How could she sit there next to him knowing what she does about his running around? Humiliating! But she has a higher agenda. She is very smart, and she just wants to win the God-damned election.

Take a little humiliation now and get power later." His next comment came directly from his own experience: "As far as Clinton is concerned, I think he would have been better off admitting he did it and moving on."

The next morning, Nixon assessed the fallout from the Clintons' appearance and savored the fact that Flowers was going to hold a press conference that afternoon and play tapes of intimate conversations with Clinton. "You know, this is really something," Nixon said. "The guy didn't just have a fling; he had a twelve-year affair. He's a repeat offender—and as governor, no less. That's arrogance of power! But I still don't think this will destroy him. He seems too slippery to have anything like this stick. And, as far as Hillary is concerned, I know I've said this before, but I still can't believe it: she was on the God-damned committee to impeach me. She's a radical. If she gets in, whoa! Everybody had better fasten their seat belts."

In February, Clinton faced a new sort of charge: that he had used unethical means to avoid the draft during the Vietnam War. Nixon felt a visceral contempt for Clinton, which, in turn, reopened his own wounds from prosecuting the war as President.

"I cannot believe that this guy is a serious contender for the Presidency," he said, in his office, on February 17th. His face was flushed with anger. "I know why he did what he did to dodge the draft: he didn't want to get his ass shot off." He clenched his fist and slammed it on the armrest of his chair. "*Nobody* wants to get their ass shot off, and yet we had tens of thousands of young men who risked and lost their lives because they had more honor and integrity in their little toe than Clinton will ever have, ever. He is a coward and a fraud. He didn't serve his country when it needed him, so why should we have him serve it when *he* is ready? No. The Flowers episode showed that he cheated on his wife. That's his business and his problem. But when he evaded the draft he cheated the country and the people whose votes he is now asking for. As I was out there, trying to end the God-damned war, he was running around claiming privilege, avoiding service, and demonstrating against it. He was no conscientious objector; he was a selfish, spoiled brat. He made my job so much harder, and he sent God knows how many men to their deaths in his place. I'll tell you one thing: if he is elected President, I will know that this country has finally gone to hell."



"Clinton confided in me. He said things that he absolutely would not want made public. I wonder if his wiretaps are working."

TOM BACHTELL

For Nixon, Clinton's character flaws were not merely peccadilloes, as his advocates claimed, but grave disqualifications for the Presidency. Grudgingly, however, Nixon tried to prepare himself for Clinton's candidacy. He respected Al Gore, Clinton's choice for Vice-President, and thought that the Tennessee senator would provide the ticket with character balance, if not regional balance. By the time of the Democratic National Convention, though, Nixon remained profoundly disturbed by the Party's nominee and what he represented. Resignation was audible in his voice when he criticized Clinton's acceptance speech: "It was too verbose and too long. He didn't show command. And he lost a few people with this New Covenant crap. What the hell is *that*? It's as bad as Bush's New Paradigm. These Ivy Leaguers who come up with this stuff have no real connection to real people. That New Covenant stuff fell flat. New Deal, New Frontier—fine. But this doesn't work. Nobody knows what the hell it is. And, as far as the personal anecdotes go in acceptance speeches, I always used them sparingly. I talked about Yorba Linda and my mother. But these guys went overboard." Nixon's gravest concern, however, was that neither Clinton nor Gore spent enough time on larger issues. "Each of them spent only four minutes talking about foreign policy. I know that it isn't popular, but, God damn it, they are asking for votes, and they had better show that they are responsible."

As the campaign wore on, Nixon began to envisage, reluctantly, a Clinton victory. "I saw him yesterday at a pig roast, or some damn thing, and while he's not a good man he's a great campaigner," he told me. For Nixon, a Clinton win would represent the beginning of a reversal of the Republican

Presidential majority he began in 1968. But it could also initiate a more active and public role for Nixon in advising—and criticizing—Clinton's Presidency. "With Bush, I had to be restrained, but with Clinton it will be no holds barred." Nixon savored the possibilities. "I think he'll take some strong foreign-policy action, like in Bosnia, to prove his manhood, like Kennedy did. Bush screwed it up from the beginning. On Russian aid, after the Persian Gulf War he could have gotten anything through the Congress at ninety-per-cent approval, which was unprecedented; even Johnson after the Kennedy thing was never that high. And he missed a golden opportunity to come out swinging early last year, when all the Democrats were lily-livered and didn't run, so we ended up with second-raters, like Brown"—Jerry Brown, the former California governor. "Come *on*," he said, shooting me a disgusted look. "At least Cuomo was a heavyweight, but he didn't do anything about it. Bush could have come back with his acceptance speech if it had more lift to it. If Clinton wins, he might want to open a channel to me, but Hillary won't allow it. He will screw up China policy and set it way back. And he's dying to normalize relations with Vietnam, which will totally vindicate his behavior during the war."

AFTER Election Day, Nixon remained doubtful whether Clinton had the experience and the discipline to be an effective President. Clinton's domestic agenda did not worry him, "because frankly I agree with a lot of what he wants to do domestically—the pro-choice stands, you know," he said on November 6th. "Not the big-government stuff, but the social stuff like abortion and workfare. That's smart. But on foreign policy the guy is just too inexperienced. When Yeltsin called to congratulate him, he already looked in over his head."

Clinton gave his first press conference as President-elect on November 12th, and Nixon watched with grudging admiration. "The guy is good," he said. "He handles the media so well, even though they are all for him anyway." But Clinton's verbosity and constant availability to the press frustrated him: "People can't get bored with him *before* he's sworn in. I'm already sick of him."

Nixon's concerns about Clinton's ability to exercise effective leadership intensified as the Clinton Cabinet began to take shape. According to Nixon, Warren Christopher was the weakest possible choice for Secretary of State: "He doesn't know anything and what he does know is wrong." Anthony Lake, the choice for national-security adviser, was "a liberal ideologue," he said. "Remember Henry"—Kissinger—"brought him in, because he respected his intelligence but didn't appreciate his desertion on Vietnam. He was wiretapped by Kissinger, and he sued him! He's far to the left. He and Clinton are hooked on three things: the Foreign Service, the U.N., and the Carter obsession with human rights. Disastrous!" Les Aspin, the choice for Secretary of Defense, was "a good man," according to Nixon. "He has character; he's responsible and progressive, but he's from Wisconsin, with a deep tradition of isolationism going back to La Follette"—Senator Robert La Follette, of Wisconsin. "The doves don't like him, because he didn't go for the nuclear freeze." The selection of a personal friend, Thomas (Mack) McLarty, for chief of staff was a significant mistake: "A President should never choose his chief of staff based on personal friendship. People can say what they want about Haldeman, but he was one hell of a chief of staff. Those who have come after aren't fit to shine his shoes. You need a real hatchet man in there, someone who can say 'No'—not a good friend."

Nixon recoiled further when Clinton made his first public-policy statement as President-elect, supporting gays in the military: "I have nothing against gays. We had plenty of them in my Administration. I don't care what people do behind closed doors; that's their own business. But life in the military is not life behind closed doors; it's life without doors, literally. As a practical matter, gays do not belong in the trenches. It's not about their ability to fight. It's about living in close quarters without having to worry about"—he paused—"the tension."

Nixon feigned lack of interest in the continuing gossip about the Clintons' personal lives, but his remarks betrayed an amused curiosity. "I heard," he said sotto voce on De-

"Not much. Just holding a client's moist hand."

cember 21st, "that they can't stand each other, that their marriage is a charade, and that she planned to divorce him if he lost. Can you believe that?" He asked the question with gleeful inquisitiveness. "He'll never dump her now, because she is the tower of strength and intellect around there." And he was appalled that Clinton complained incessantly about his press coverage. "How dare he bitch about his coverage! They have treated him with kid gloves! He should be kissing their asses—as Johnson used to say, 'kissing ass in Macy's window.' I hope they give Clinton the business, by God!" He clenched his fist in the famous Nixon fashion. "This whole thing has put Bush into a terrible funk. Everyone in Washington is saying that he is extremely depressed. Well, of course he is! Do they expect him to jump up and down? He just lost the God-damned election. He appears O.K. on the outside, but he is devastated inside. And the latest word is that Barbara wants to kill Baker"—the former Secretary of State and unofficial Bush campaign director. "She holds him responsible and she's really angry." The fist relaxed. "Politics is not for the weak of heart. Even grizzled types like me get bruised." He paused and smiled. "Never admit it, though."

The Clintons and the Gores, meanwhile, embarked on a hundred-mile bus tour en route to Washington for the Inauguration. It was billed as a trip to express gratitude to their supporters and to make it clear that they themselves would remain in touch with the people who had sent them to the White House. Nixon thought the idea was absurd. "Are you going to get on the bus?" he asked me when he called me from his residence, laughing so hard that he dropped his telephone. "For a President-elect to get on a bus, and drive around waving to people like some kind of idiot, is really too much. During the campaign, he could play the sax and do whatever the hell else he did, but now he is going to be President, and with that comes some responsibility to dignity."

"Cézanne has always been my man, but is he worth a trip to Philadelphia?"

• •

NIXON had seen the cycles of American politics push great and lesser leaders to the top and, in turn, bring them down. Political cycles would eventually move the country in another direction, as they always had, but for Nixon Clinton's election lowered dramatically the moral gauge not only of the Presidency but of the country.

Nixon spent Inauguration Day, 1993, in front of his television set, watching the transfer of power. He called me after the ceremonies and said, with some wistfulness in his voice, "Bush looked awfully sad. It's rough on him. I had many loyalists; Reagan had some; Bush had none. Who knows if Clinton has any? Probably not, especially since even his wife is for him only because he is her ticket to power. Tricia"—Nixon's other daughter, Tricia Nixon Cox—"saw them coming down the steps of Blair House this morning, and when they didn't think any cameras were on them he snapped at her. Now, Monica, I don't think he would be that stupid as to make a blunder like that on Inauguration Day, but the point is that he should know by now that every time he sneezes there will be commentary on the evening news. They must at least *pretend* to like each other. They, of course, need each other; she's the brains, he's the vessel. He's a good speaker but not particularly sincere. He loves himself, though, and that comes across. He *loves* the adulation."

Nixon held out a slim hope that the office might have a moderating effect on the President's and the First Lady's views, though he believed that she would be less willing to compromise than he would be. Nixon was torn between wanting to advise Clinton in order to save him from mistakes and wanting to savor the political satisfaction of watching him stumble. He did both.

"He could be a great President," he said two days after Clinton's Inauguration. "But I doubt it. It's clear that the guy can be pushed around. Remember with Roosevelt they used to say, 'Clear it with Sidney'?"—Sidney Hillman, the labor leader. "Well, Clinton must clear everything with Nader, the N.E.A., with Hillary, and God knows who else. The guy is susceptible to pressure, and that will cripple his Presidency."

IN TRANSIT

"Sandals more interwoven and complete
To fit the naked foot of poesy . . ."
I look up, on this now mid-morning ride:
there, angled dozing in a dove-gray seat,
a ginger-haired girl's anonymous beauty
has caught my eye, the usual distraction.
And then a brick wall on the urban hillside
beyond, sent past at the appropriate
moment in this private itinerary:
it is the hospital where my father died.
Forever beyond pity or contrition,
I am fixed, unmoving. I sweat at how
slowly the wheel of my regard moves on.
I will not recall her an hour from now.

—Karl Kirchwey

Even before being sworn in, Clinton had spoken to Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, both of whom, according to Nixon, "he should see but not expect to learn much from." Clinton's failure thus far to call on Nixon distressed him. "If he wants distance from me, fine," he had said on November 28th. "I won't have to pull my punches, like I did with Bush. The press, of course, wants to cut him some slack to protect him, little Chelsea, and poor Hillary, who is such a weak little thing. *Please.*"

Clinton's most serious errors, according to Nixon, involved mistaking conversation for leadership, and personal interaction for decision-making. His impulse to handle everything at once would not serve him well in foreign affairs, and this is where Nixon hoped to step in: Nixon relished the idea that Clinton might defer to him on international affairs, and grant more weight to his opinions and advice than either Reagan or Bush had, and perhaps even act on them. Clinton was a clean slate with regard to foreign policy, and Nixon hoped to fill it with his own lessons. Steer the country and insure the safety of the world, Nixon wanted to advise him, and your political position will be secure. His opportunity approached quickly.

Nixon intended to visit Russia in mid-February and expressed some concern that Clinton might object. "Mrs. Nixon brought up the fact that he isn't going to like it that we are going to Russia, but I said neither did Bush and Reagan," he said on January 28, 1993. He paced slowly in the office while considering the issue. "They can't stop me," he said, and added that he was glad to be seeing Strobe Talbott, Clinton's adviser on Russian affairs. "It will keep Clinton's gang from pissing on the trip." After again castigating Clinton's foreign-policy team, Nixon said, "Besides, it's in their interest to have me go. After all, they don't know shit from Shinola on foreign policy."

Nixon's trip to Russia, on which I accompanied him, was marked by profound relief that Clinton supported the mission and by the hope that he would get in touch with Nixon for a debriefing upon our return. When we landed in New Jersey, on February 22nd, we learned that Clinton had arranged to meet Russia's President, Boris Yeltsin, on April 4th.

"He'd be wise to talk to me before that," Nixon said to me over the phone on February 25th. Influenza had afflicted all of us during the last days of the trip, and he choked out his words. "This damn cold! The doctor told me that it will last a week. You can take that, because you're young, but at my age I can't afford a week! But, getting back to Clinton, I don't know if he will call on me. He should, but the newspeople are slobbering all over him, so he may not want to alienate them by talking to me. We'll see. And, you know, Hillary's people are lulus. They are really radical. She is something else." He sneezed and coughed at the other end of the phone. "In the meantime, drink a lot of liquids and try to sleep." Nixon rarely complained, but he finally grumbled, "I'm feeling pretty bad. It's a miserable God-damned thing. I haven't been sick like this in five years! I know you have the same thing, so I'll let you go. Besides, I'm on codeine, and I feel like I'm walking on the ceiling!"

On February 28th, a recuperating Nixon received a signal that his visit to Russia had had an effect on Clinton. News reports indicated that the President planned to increase aid to Russia by three hundred million dollars, in the hope of strengthening the forces for democratic reform, to which Nixon responded, "That's pennies." Later, he said, "He needs to do more, and if he doesn't I will come after him. All of this other crap he's consumed with—gays in the Army, health reform—none of it matters compared to having to fight another Cold War."

Another signal of Clinton's interest in Nixon's advice came on March 2nd from Senator Bob Dole, who knew that Clinton planned to attend a party in honor of Senator Strom Thurmond. "Dole told him that I was going to be there and that we should meet prior to it," Nixon told me. "And Clinton—I don't know how serious he was—said, 'Well, I guess I'll call him about Russia or something.' We'll see. The guy overcommits on everything. I doubt he'll call."

Clinton did, however, call Nixon that day—March 2, 1993—and their unexpectedly close relationship was born. Later that evening, Nixon left a one-sentence message on my answering machine: "I just had a forty-minute conversation with your friend who lives in the White House."

THE next morning, Nixon sat in his office twirling his eyeglasses and sporting a wry grin. "Have a seat," he said to me. "I waited five minutes on the line, and then eight minutes, and they couldn't find him. The White House operator asked if he could call me back. At about ten minutes to ten o'clock, he called again. Frankly, he sounded very tired, and, most surprising, he confided in me. He said things that he absolutely would not want made public. I wonder if his wiretaps are working." He chuckled.

"He was very respectful, but with no sickening bullshit. To give you a quick overview, he only spent one-third of the time on foreign policy—mostly Russia, but he asked about China also. He said that he was worried that his defense cuts may be too steep; of course, he may have just said that because he thought I'd be against cutting defense too much. But he likes to talk, and he was candid on aid to Russia. I gave him the highlights of what we found. He asked what I thought of Yeltsin, and he said he admired his guts for seeing him when Clinton was a candidate. After all, Bush was President. He admired the fact that Yeltsin was so straightforward; I told him that with Yeltsin what you see is what you get. He said that he has spoken to Yeltsin twice and Yeltsin sounded worried. Clinton suggested that they meet earlier than the April 4th date, but Yeltsin wanted to wait until after his struggle with the Parliament had been resolved. He said that Yeltsin told him to see me."

Nixon raised an eyebrow. "That was something! But Clinton asked me, 'Will he last?' I told him that it will be a very tough thing. And he won't survive unless he has U.S. support. He is the best politician in Russia, the most popular—and elected. We cannot leave any distance between the United States and him. He asked about sending technical assistance and so forth. But what is amazing is that two-thirds of the conversation was about domestic policy."

He bit one end of his eyeglasses. "He said it was a tough call as to what to do. I told him that I am almost solely concentrating on foreign policy, because I didn't want him to feel that he had to listen to me on that score; we are, after all, on different sides of most domestic issues. So I reassured him that I don't engage in partisan politics anymore but that any criticism I give is meant to be constructive. He appreciated that."

Nixon levelled his gaze on me. "He never brought up Hillary. Not once. And I gave him several lead-ins. He didn't respond to any of them. Strange." He paused, then went on, "He said that he gets up at six, jogs, has breakfast with Chelsea and sees her to school, and gets to bed around eleven. He wanted to know if that was typical. It was great to hear him ask that, because I used to observe Eisenhower's schedule for that same reason. When you are in that job, you want to know that even your schedule is right—or, at least, typical.

"Anyway, it was the best conversation with a President I've had since I was President. Better than with Bush, because Baker was always looming around. And I *never* had such a conversation with Reagan. Clinton wanted to be reassured. It was never a dialogue with the others. I used to have to force things into the conversation with Reagan and Bush. This was a different cup of tea. He really let his hair down. This guy does a lot of thinking." Nixon was impressed with Clinton's intellectual curiosity and the political risk involved with the call. "I think that his call is significant." He stopped, put his glasses on the end table, and folded his hands together. "He invited me to the White House."

The sentence hung in the air before he continued. "In twelve years, neither Reagan nor Bush *ever* put me on the White House schedule or put a picture out. We would get the story out on occasion, but you know . . ." His voice trailed off. He was clearly satisfied and relieved. Clinton's call was a signal that he wanted to work with Nixon, and, since the conversation was so productive, substantive, and cordial, Nixon's influence would only grow.

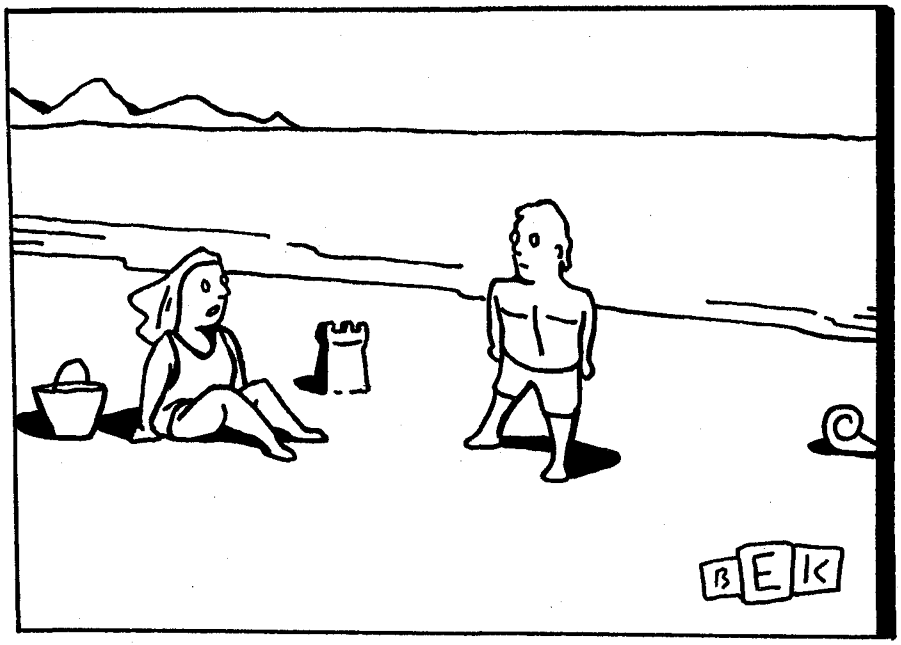
He continued to gauge the effects of his conversation with Clinton the next day. He put down his handheld tape recorder when I entered the office, and waved me in. "I'm just dictating my thoughts on the conversation with Clinton. It was very interesting. I think he overruled Hillary on calling me, because you know that she wouldn't have approved. Why do you think he called?"

"I think he realized that he had more to gain by talking to you than by ignoring you," I said. "I also think, though, that by drawing you in personally he was making it more difficult for you to criticize him."

"That's right," he said. "Disarm the enemy. I know it. I think he doesn't want to have to worry about me upstaging him. You know, he said he comes from a small state and didn't realize the enormity of the job. But I tried to get it through to him that he needs to spend more time on foreign policy, because—well, look, he's starting to be criticized in the press for it, and he must tend to it before a crisis forces him into it. Besides, foreign policy is just more interesting. As long as he is talking to me, he'll be O.K. If he relies on his Carter-type advisers, he will run into trouble."

On March 5th, a snowy Friday, Nixon summoned me to the office. He cleared his throat and paused dramatically. "Clinton wants to see me at the White House, Monday at three. Not in the Oval Office—in the residence—but he has his reasons."

Nixon spent the weekend preparing for his meeting with Clinton. He wrote



"I didn't realize how much I needed to get away from that day-care grind."

extensive notes, primarily about Russia, and reviewed them until he felt comfortable with his points and how he would structure the conversation. He met with Clinton at the White House on March 8th and remained in Washington for two additional days, during which he delivered a rousing speech on the House floor. News coverage of these events was positive and extensive. Nixon, the headlines proclaimed, was back—triumphantly—once again.

On March 11th, Nixon returned to the office and called to me over the intercom. "Monica," he said. "Remember me? Come on in."

When I opened the door to his office, I found him beaming from behind his desk. He stood up, moved to his corner chair, propped his feet up on the ottoman, waved me into my chair, and tried to restrain his grin. "The House speech was really something. I did it from the well, because I wanted to talk *with* them, not *to* them. I told them that the last time I was there was forty-three years ago, when I briefed the chamber about the Alger Hiss case. Who would have thought I'd be back in 1993 talking about a democratic Russia? They loved it. And I said that I heard MacArthur speak after he was recalled by Truman from Korea. He said, 'Old soldiers never die. They just fade away.' I said, 'Old politicians sometimes die, but they *never* fade away.' The place roared!" Nixon clapped his hands together. "Oh, boy! It was really something."

He recrossed his legs and assumed a graver tone. "The meeting at the White House was the best I have had since I was President. Clinton was late greeting me—which I understand is a big problem for him—because, he said, he was on the phone with the Filipinos. I said I understood. Clinton took me up to the residence, and he said that we had almost met once in 1979 in Hong Kong, but he said he was just a governor then and it didn't work out. Incidentally, I'm a little annoyed that Bush turned the Treaty Room, which was Lincoln's Cabinet Room, into an office. Why do people do such stupid things?" He rolled his eyes.

"Anyway, Clinton is very earthy. He cursed: 'asshole,' 'son of a bitch,' 'bastard'—you know. He's a very straightforward conversationalist. Up in the residence, I saw Chelsea, who was very shy, and Hillary. The kid ran right to him and never once looked at her mother. I could see that she had a warm relationship with him but was almost afraid of her. Hillary is ice-cold. You can see it in her eyes. She is a piece of work. She was very respectful to me and said all of the right things. But where he was very warm with Chelsea—he's touchy-feely, anyway—she wasn't at all.

"We discussed health care, and Clinton said how difficult it was because of all the vested interests. Hillary did say that our Administration had the best health program—and we did. Elliot Richardson"—he served as Nixon's Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare—"put together a hell of a deal. She also said that we did great things on the domestic side. Although compliments coming from her are like I don't know what! Both of them are very smooth. Clinton was casual. We both drank Diet Cokes. As an aside, he told me that he got fattest in New Hampshire when he was defending himself. I think the first phone call broke the ice, because he really let his hair down with me.

"I told him that on Russia the risk of action is great but the risk of inaction was greater. He took it. He was also very interested in China. He told me to tell the Chinese that he's an 'O.K.' guy, because he's nervous about what they think of him. I told him to hit the Japanese on aiding Russia and to hammer them all on the I.M.F. He brightened up when I told him about the grain-barter deal. He made a note when I said that Russia must develop a new entrepreneurial class and do it at the grass roots—that's the Peace Corps mentality, which is why he picked up on it. He also agreed that it will take more money than what he put forward.

"He said he's only been to Camp David once, because he wanted to get to know the White House first. I was impressed that he didn't engage in flattery, none of this backslapping bullshit on the Op-Ed"—Nixon's March 5th *Times* piece on the importance of aiding the Russian democratic transition—"or the great contribution I've made. A politician's capacity for flattery is boundless, but there is no time for it in a conversation like this. He wanted to talk seriously; I like that. Although"—he pointed a finger in the air—"he didn't send best wishes to Mrs. Nixon when I mentioned that she was ill. But anyway he was poised, intelligent, imaginative, and very self-confident. He's President, and he knows it. He also said that the domestic issues are very difficult." He lowered his voice. "Monica, history will not remember him for *anything* he does domestically. The economy will recover; it's all short term and, let's face it, very boring."

Toward the end of March, however, Nixon's optimism that Clinton would act more forcefully on Russian aid turned to skepticism. "I got the sense that Clinton was committed to doing more on Russia, but I hope he wasn't just telling me what I wanted to hear. Bush and Baker suffered from a great lack of creativity in foreign policy; it was a damn shame that they were in charge at the end of the Cold War. But here Clinton has a historic chance to do something, and I don't see it happening." He sighed.

On March 23rd, Clinton held his first press conference as President, and Nixon pronounced himself "very impressed" with the performance. "I have to say that the guy has stood up well, so far. I agreed with almost everything he said today. But the reporters—and God

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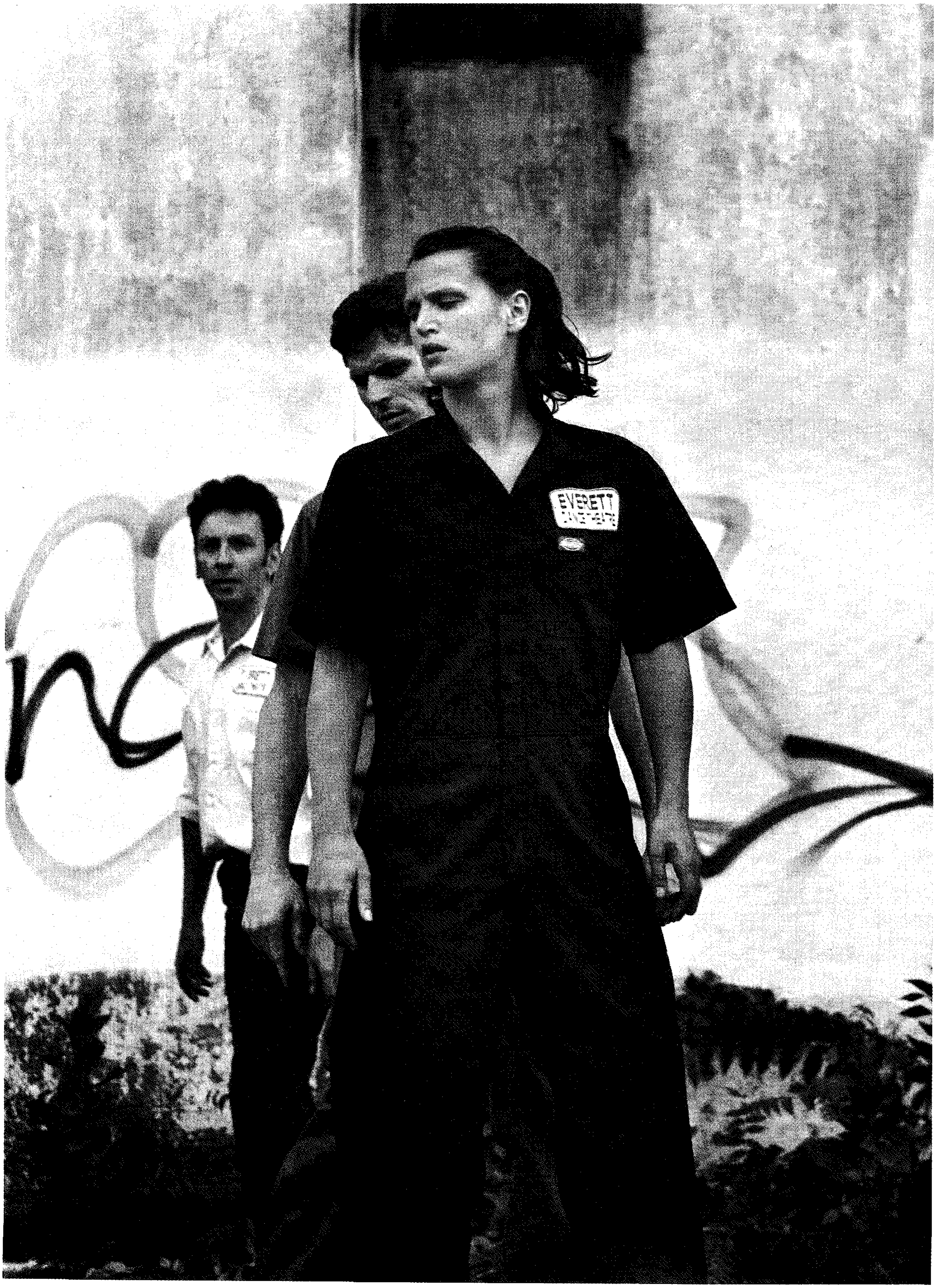
ON THEIR TOES

The Everett Dance Theatre, from Providence, Rhode Island, specializes in out-of-the-way subjects, such as the links between science and art ("The Science Project") and the early history of aviation ("Flight"). In an ode to labor, "Body of Work" (to be performed at Jacob's Pillow this week, and in New York at Dance Theatre Workshop, August 28th-31st and September 4th-7th), the eight members of the company sew, pile up stones, and shovel coal. A pas-de-deux passage includes a wooden work cart on casters, and during accompanying video clips—of interviews with workers at loading docks, textile mills, and electric plants—the dancers carry the screens across the stage, like picket signs. The cumulative effect is not at all laborious, and the rapid segments—of work, chant, street dance, filmed recollection—are dreamy, not doctrinaire.


EVERETT
DANCE THEATRE

Rachel Jungels, Aaron Jungels, and Walter Ferrero. Photograph by Philip Trager.

AUTHENTIC STREET CUISINE OF NEW YORK CITY
Levin

knows I've had the worst—seemed really nasty. That's a hazard of the job, but God damn it, are they rude!"

Clinton called Nixon the next day. When I went to the residence at four o'clock in the afternoon on March 24th, Nixon told me that he had spoken to Clinton for about twenty minutes and was eager to discuss the conversation. "He came for straight advice—no bullshit. I sensed he was really panicked about what to do on the Russian thing. I told him that I thought what he's done so far has been outstanding and that he must meet Yeltsin carrying a significant aid program. I reiterated that it's a risk to support Yeltsin, but if he goes down without U.S. support it will be far worse. He must see Yeltsin alone—no Secretaries of Whatever or other assholes along. If I had waited for the bureaucracy, we never would have had the China initiative. He gave me the four policy options on Russia he has, two of which are ludicrous. And you can't do anything at the ministerial level. I sent him a fax on this which I think is pretty good. I told him that he must deliver a real program, and he must stand up for Yeltsin unequivocally. He must enlist the G-7 at the Presidential level to make the package big enough. He should meet Yeltsin in Vladivostok and then go to Tokyo and stroke the Japanese. They should be doing more for Russia."

Although he built a positive relationship with Clinton, Nixon resented Clinton's ability to thrive despite transgressions that would have severely damaged another President. The press, he believed, protected Clinton as it had protected Kennedy, but Clinton himself was masterly at dodging the political bullets. Nixon at once admired him and scorned him. The next phone call from the White House illustrated these duelling opinions.

"You will be pleased to hear that I got another call from Clinton today," he told me on April 26th, with thinly veiled satisfaction. "He thanked me again for taking the lead on aid to Russia, and he was delighted with the election result"—a national vote of confidence for Yeltsin—"although he agreed with me that the media has been disgusting by downplaying Yeltsin's victory. Naturally, I'm not for Clinton, but I will side with him when the media pack comes after him."

Clinton had other motives as well. "The main reason he called was to ask what I thought about Bosnia," Nixon continued. "It's obvious that he's leaning toward lifting the embargo and using limited air strikes against the Serbs. I told him that I agreed, but whatever he decided I'd support. He's on the right track with this, since we have got to have a balance of force on the ground before a peace agreement is even an option, but I didn't want to push it, in case he goes with something else. To reinforce this point, I told him that you can only negotiate at the table what you win on the battlefield. And I said that if the Serbs aren't stopped they may go after other parts of Yugoslavia. He made a good point. He said, 'Yes, or in other parts of the world.' He is tilting toward action and thought that Britain and France would go along. I also told him that he cannot win the war there, but he can provide a correlation of forces that may bring some sense into their heads.

"He listened, but who knows what we will hear tomorrow? He's very susceptible to pressure from the press. And it burns me up to see that Tony Lewis"—the *Times* columnist—"who went through a male change of life over our bombing in Vietnam, is for our involvement in Bosnia. With a Democratic President, I guess military intervention is O.K."

When Clinton continued to vacillate over policy on the former Yugoslavia, Nixon denounced his behavior as "Hamlet-like deliberating" and reacted angrily: "Bosnia is screwed up beyond belief. He should have either said, 'We'll do nothing, or something.' Instead he has the worst of both worlds."

Then, when I told him that Clinton planned to speak at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Memorial Day, he became enraged. "My God!" he exclaimed, throwing his pen down. "That is obscene! I will never go to that memorial. I don't like it. It's so mournful." Nixon felt that the memorial reinforced negative sentiment about Vietnam and, rather than honor those soldiers' ultimate sacrifice, portrayed their losses as part of a mistaken enterprise. "But Clinton! That makes me want to puke! His demonstrations prolonged the war. He's a brazen bastard." He ran his hand over his hair.

"Oh, by the way, I got a haircut this morning—can you tell?" he asked. "Dominic, my barber, was interviewed after Clinton's two-hundred-dollar haircut and was asked how much I pay for one. I pay him twenty dollars every time, which is what a haircut *should* be, for God's sake." His scowl turned into a smile. "Well, from Vietnam to hair—we've covered a *lot* of ground today!"

On June 22, 1993, Pat Nixon died, of lung cancer, devastating the former President and—unexpectedly—affecting his relationship with the sitting President. Neither he nor Mrs. Clinton attended Mrs. Nixon's funeral. The Administration was represented by the Clintons' friend Vernon Jordan, who held no formal Administration position. Nixon, racked with grief, exploded after the service. "Vernon Jordan? The Clintons sent Vernon Jordan? He's a fine man, but come *on.* Hillary should have been there. That was inexcusable. He comes to me for advice to save his ass, and he can't even send a Cabinet member to Mrs. Nixon's funeral? What the hell was he thinking?" He shook his head, and then, as if looking for a revenge over which he had no control, asked, "Are his polls still in the toilet?"

Nixon's attitude toward Clinton went through a marked change after the funeral. Disappointment evolved into anger and, eventually, hostility. If Clinton wanted advice, Nixon would provide it, but without the cordiality that had previously characterized their relationship. From that point on, Nixon had no illusion that Clinton came to him for any reason other than self-interest.

In July, a tragedy intensified the air of mystery and sordidness surrounding the Whitewater affair. The scandal fascinated Nixon, but nothing had prepared him for the news of the suicide of Vincent Foster, the deputy White House counsel. "Why do you think he did it?" Nixon said. "I don't think it was the pressure of the White House. Do you? I mean, there's got to be more here than meets the eye." He was clearly upset. "Why would he crack? What sends people over the edge? He had a family. He had a good job . . ." His voice trailed off.

Later, he said, "Imagine the kind of pressure we were under! We had the war, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators, the press kicking us every night. And this was well before Watergate! What this Administration has to deal with is nothing by comparison." He stopped. "I don't mean to minimize what Foster was going through, but you know what I mean. Maybe, coming from Little Rock, he just wasn't ready. And it could've been Nussbaum"—Bernard Nussbaum, the chief White House counsel. "He's a Watergate guy and a tough shit. Chiefs can treat deputies like crap. I just hope that that wasn't the reason. Nothing in life is that bad, where suicide is the only option. Believe me, I was under enormous pressure in the Watergate period, but not once did that ever—and I mean *ever*—cross my mind."

On July 29th, Nixon called me into the office and handed me a newspaper, which he had folded back to a story on Foster. He raised an eyebrow. "Something is very fishy here," he said. "I don't think it was murder, as some have suggested. But I do think there is more here than they are letting on. I can't believe that it has taken them this long to announce the discovery of the suicide note. The first place they should have looked was in the son of a bitch's briefcase, and only now are they saying that they found it! Please. Files had been moved, the police were restricted from the office . . . What the hell? It smells like a coverup, and they went after us on it, but look at the way they have handled this—terrible! . . . They should interview Nussbaum. They can't hide behind attorney-client privilege, because Dean"—Nixon's White House counsel John Dean—"knocked that out with Watergate."

Months later, as evidence and allegations relating to Whitewater continued to unfold, Nixon said, "My critics used to say that Watergate was a gift to them; here we have a gift from the Clintons and no one is up to using it. The point has to be made that, unlike this situation, no one ever profited in Watergate. Here you have financial gain *and* abuse of power . . . and nothing is done. And here was Hillary, on the impeachment committee, screaming about the eighteen and a half minutes, and now she's in Little Rock, shredding."

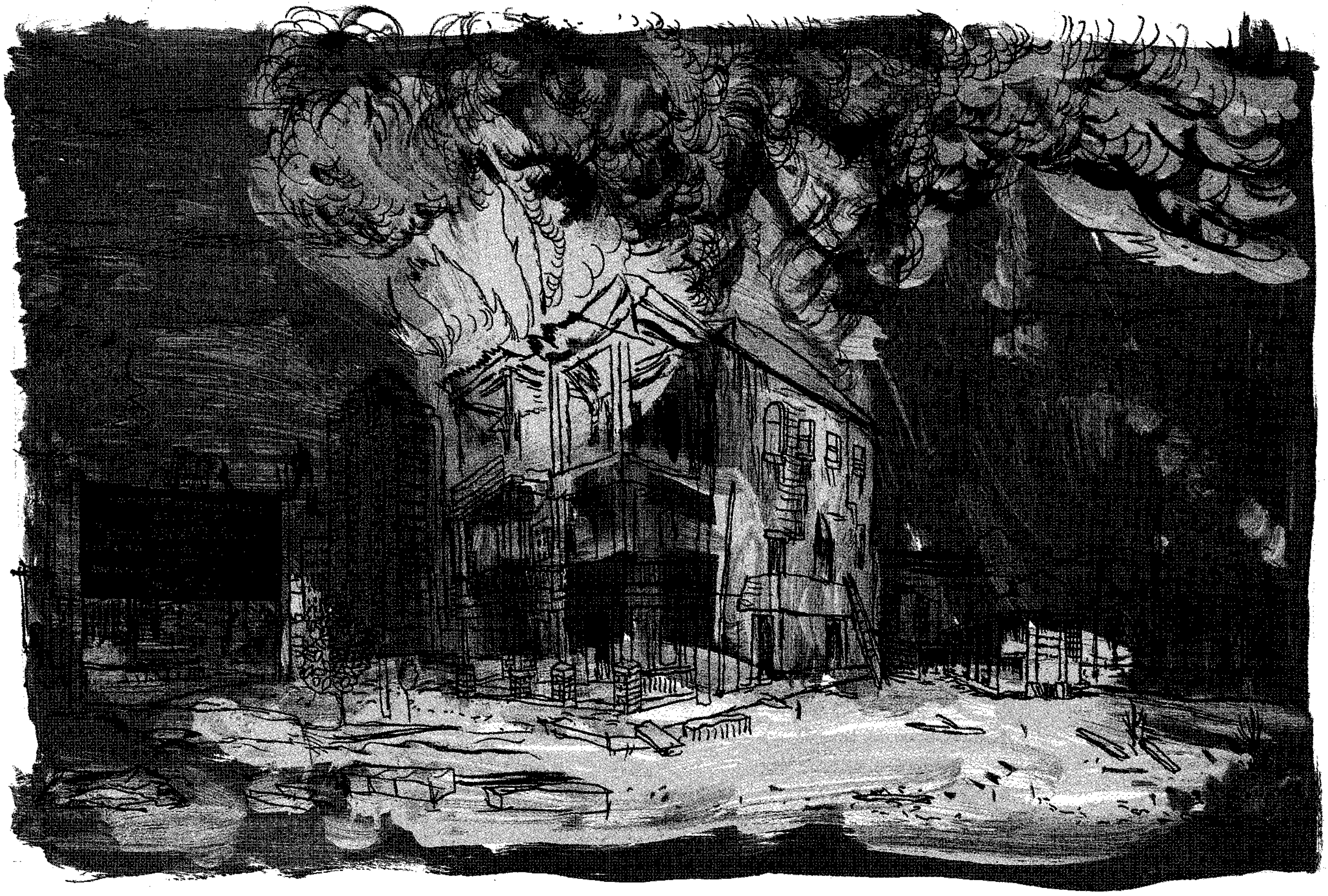
Nixon's concerns about Whitewater continued to affect his relationship with Clinton. Several months later, on March 2, 1994, the White House called to inform him that Clinton would be calling the next day—probably, Nixon speculated, to discuss Nixon's next trip to Russia. Nixon responded with nonchalance. "The guy is doing what's in his interest, which is only right. But I think I'd like some distance from that crowd at this point."

After Nixon and Clinton spoke—for the last time—Nixon told me, "This conversation was more limited, but it was still good. He was respectful, always referring to me as 'Mr. President.' With Reagan, I started that, and he said, 'Now, Dick, we've known each other a long time.' Bush was always like that. But with this guy it's just not right. We're of two different generations."

Clinton was part of a generation that in its youth rebelled against Nixon and what he represented and in its middle age and growing power sought his guidance. It was a mutually beneficial relationship: Clinton and Nixon worked well together, even though Nixon was simultaneously campaigning to replace Clinton with Dole in 1996.

Nixon saw Dole's candidacy as the last best chance to return traditional conservative truths to the Presidency: that government should bring people up without interfering in their lives, that character matters, and that leadership requires a judicious balance of style and substance, compassion and toughness, idealism and pragmatism. "Dole is the only one who can lead," Nixon said. "He is by far the smartest politician—and Republican—in the country today."

Nixon suffered a massive stroke on April 18, 1994, and died four days later, at the age of eighty-one. Clinton, speaking at the funeral, made no direct reference to the scandal that had forced his predecessor out of office. Rather, Clinton's remarks suggested that Nixon was too large a figure, with too great an influence on the twentieth century, to remain frozen in 1974. When he asked that we stop "judging President Nixon on anything less than his entire life and career," it was a reminder that time had changed perceptions, and that President Clinton had done more to restore President Nixon to the center of power than had anyone else apart from Richard Nixon himself. ♦



A REPORTER AT LARGE

WHO BURNED ATLANTA?

The real story of the all-new city.

BY ALEXANDER STILLE

At Tenth Street and Peachtree, in midtown Atlanta, the burned-out wreck of a three-story apartment house stands forlorn, catercorner to a sports bar and next to an empty lot. On a wrought-iron fence surrounding the building, signs declare it to be a historic landmark—the home of Margaret Mitchell, the author of "Gone with the Wind." Anyone who nurses ideas of Mitchell's having lived in a white-columned antebellum Tara, like her heroine, Scarlett O'Hara, will be disappointed to see the charred and roofless remains of this relatively undistinguished building, which Mitchell herself referred to as the Dump.

When I first began to spend time in Atlanta, about a year ago, the shell of the Mitchell house seemed to me a symbol of modern Atlanta: an example of the perilous decline of Atlanta's once vital urban core, of the suburbanization of the city, and of the slash-and-burn development policy that had reduced Atlanta's proudest street to an enormous strip mall. It also seemed symbolic of something more important: Atlanta's uneasy relationship with its own past, which is a mixture of reverent nostalgia and total neglect.

Last year, a flurry of activity began at the Mitchell house. Inner walls rose up, and a roof was added. As Atlanta prepared to show itself off to the world, it seemed to be grasping for a tenuous link to the past, albeit a fictional account of a romanticized antebellum life that had never existed. Things took an even stranger turn this spring, when, on the night of May 12th, someone broke into the house and started a fire, the second arsonous blaze to gut the building in the past two years. The mayor of the city, Bill Campbell, who is black, offered a ten-thousand-dollar reward to help find the perpetrator. Although the arsonist's motive remains unknown, efforts to rebuild the house have met with protest in

The ruined building (above) where Margaret Mitchell once lived is symbolic of Atlanta's uneasy relationship with its own past.

GARY PANTER

some quarters of Atlanta's black community, where the house is viewed as a symbol of racism and segregation—so that what began as a piece of historic preservation has intersected with the city's racial politics.

Atlanta is a city of contradictions. It is home to the largest concentration of black universities in the United States, has a rich and educated black middle class, and has been run by black mayors for the last twenty-four years; it is referred to as Black Mecca. But the Confederate battle flag still flies over the Georgia statehouse. Between 1915 and 1945, the city was the official headquarters of the Ku Klux Klan, and yet in the fifties and sixties it became the cradle of the civil-rights movement. Atlanta seems obsessed with its history: the heroes of the old Confederacy—Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson—stand watch over the city from their perch on the side of Stone Mountain, Atlanta's version of Mt. Rushmore. When people in Atlanta speak about "the war," they are talking not about Vietnam or any of the wars of the last hundred years but about "the war of Northern aggression." Yet Atlanta is also an upstart city: it is much younger than Richmond, Charleston, or Savannah, and has a brash, openly commercial nature. While Savannah basks in its former glory, having chosen historic preservation over economic growth, Atlanta has become the boomtown of the fastest-growing region of the United States, going from one million to three and a half million people in about thirty years. Unfortunately, in its drive to become a major capital, it has lost much of its regional character, and looks remarkably like every other new American city: it could be Phoenix, Houston, Denver, or Seattle.

FIRE is a recurrent theme in the history of Atlanta. Its first and most famous fire was the one set by the Union Army's General William Tecumseh Sherman, after he captured the city, in 1864, during the Civil War. That fire, of course, is featured in "Gone with the Wind," and it occupies a large place in the city's collective imagination. When I asked Marva Brooks, a prominent black attorney on the board of trustees of the Mitchell house, why there are so few historic buildings in Atlanta, she said, "Sherman kind of took care of that," repeating a largely unquestioned credo held by Atlantans black and white. This cherished belief, however, is contradicted by every documentary and photographic history of the city. "It's an outright lie," Tommy Jones, a leading historic preservationist, says. Atlanta came into existence in 1837, as a railroad terminus, so there was not much of a city to destroy; the population when the war began was ninety-six hundred. But Atlanta had become strategically important, as the Confederacy built arms factories here to supply its troops through the city's railroad network. Sherman destroyed the business district, railroads, and munitions plants; contrary to legend, however, he spared many of the homes. Some four hundred buildings survived his stay, all but a handful of which are now gone.

In fact, the myth of Sherman's razing of the city has furnished Atlanta with a convenient alibi for its own wholesale bulldozing of most of its historic architecture. I went downtown with Jones, who, with his goatee and his black pickup truck, is a combination of good ole boy and fifties hipster. He is also a walking encyclopedia of Atlanta architecture: as we drove along Peachtree, we travelled through a city that exists now only in photographs, engravings, and Jones's imagination. He recalls a day in the late fifties when his parents took him to see the antebellum houses before they were levelled to make way for highway construction. "My parents were not preservationists, and there was no opposition to the highway, but they realized that something important was being lost and took me to see the houses before they were torn down," he said as we looked up at the massive highway overpass. More than thirty years later, the area still looks as if it had been recently dynamited; it is now a slum, with a few dishevelled-looking people wandering the streets as cars whiz by above their heads on the way to the airport.

We were in the heart of downtown Atlanta, just a few blocks south of City Hall, the State Capitol, and the site of the former train depot that was once Atlanta's lifeblood. Sherman burned the original depot, but a far grander station was built, which, with its tall, twin-towered façade, was Atlanta's version of Notre-Dame. Then, in 1978, Atlanta tore down the station, though it was widely acknowledged to be among the city's architectural glories. (The bowels of the old railroad system have been transformed into a tacky subterranean mall called Underground Atlanta.) About a hundred yards away is the beginning of Peachtree Street, which cuts through the middle of the city and continues north for more than ten miles. "Our parents used to say that Peachtree went all the way north to New York," an older Atlantan told me. It starts in the financial and hotel district, passes through midtown (where Margaret Mitchell and most well-to-do Atlantans used to live), travels on to the fashionable shopping malls of Buckhead, and then, crossing the city limits, enters the ghastly suburban developments that have grown up around Atlanta. In other words, Peachtree contains the history of Atlanta, from terminus to suburban sprawl.

In the nineteenth century, most of the best homes in Atlanta were downtown. Sherman and his troops not only did not destroy the houses here; they stayed in them. Sherman himself requisitioned the mansion of John Neal, and he left it intact, only to have the government of Atlanta knock it down, in 1928, to make way for its own City Hall. One of Sherman's officers stayed in the Austin Leyden house, a spectacular Greek Revival home with white columns on three sides. The Leyden house also survived the Civil War, but it did not survive Asa G. Candler, Sr., the founder of the Coca-Cola Company, who bought the house in 1912 and tore it down, even though he had no plans to build anything there himself. He felt that the land was more valuable as an empty lot. And he was probably right. He eventually sold the plot to Macy's, and the department store that was built on the site still stands there—on Peachtree between Ellis and Cain Streets.

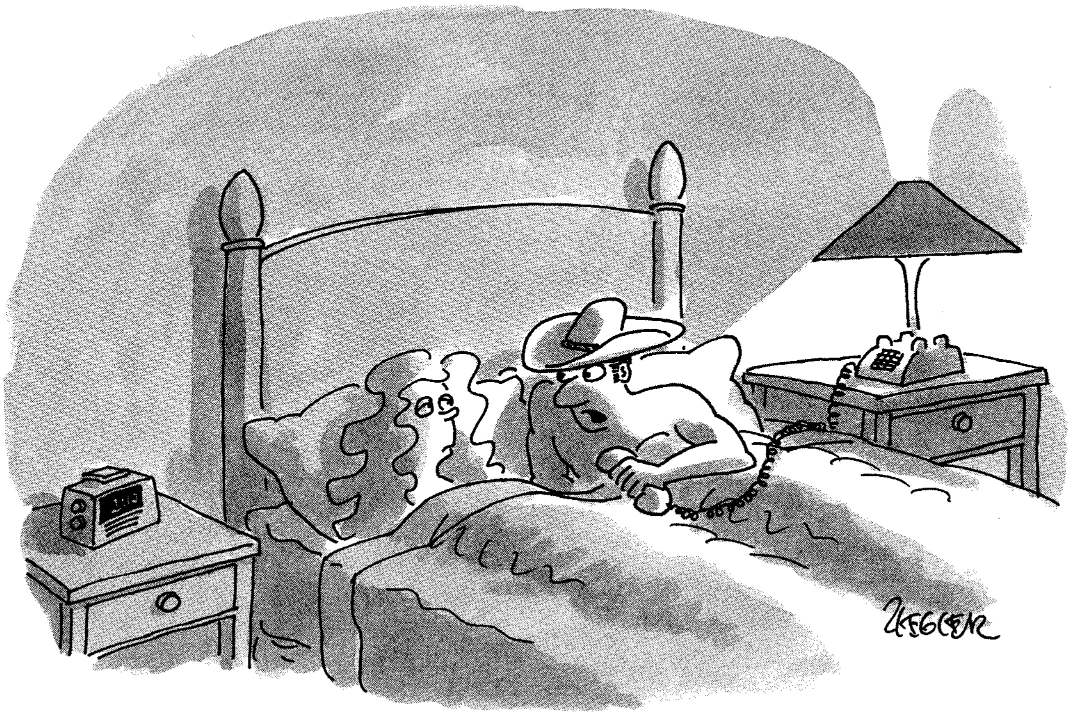
In "Gone with the Wind," Scarlett O'Hara lived on this same stretch of Peachtree after she married Rhett Butler. Photographs from the late nineteenth century show the block still lined with magnificent mansions, which, one by one, were levelled in favor of commercial real estate; ironically, they gave way to multistory office buildings and hotels that were in many cases distinguished buildings themselves and were levelled in their turn. As we drove along Peachtree, I had the book "Classic Atlanta" in hand, and I could see that virtually all the buildings shown on the skyline from the twenties and thirties are gone: the Piedmont, the Ansley, the Arragon, the Fourth National Bank, the Hebrew Orphans' Home. Atlanta, city of shopping malls, has been unkind even to its own progeny: the Peachtree Arcade—one of America's first malls, which ran between Peachtree and Broad Streets—was built in 1917 and demolished in 1964.

As downtown Peachtree became commercialized, Atlantans began building grand houses farther up the street, in the midtown area. Among them was Eugene Mitchell, who built a large, white-columned mansion on Peachtree just north of Seventeenth. Margaret Mitchell grew up there, and it may well have served as a model for Tara. With the installation of trolley cars in the late nineteenth century and then the advent of the automobile, Atlantans kept moving north—up Peachtree, out to Buckhead, which is now the principal refuge of white, wealthy Atlanta. And, in the frenzy of deconstruction and construction which accompanied the white flight of the sixties and seventies—office buildings went up as houses and apartments went down—most of the buildings associated with Margaret Mitchell, including her childhood home, met the wrecking ball.

"This is a town with virtually no historical sentiment, all the notions of 'Gone with the Wind' notwithstanding," Rick Beard, the director of the Atlanta History Center, told me. "If there are some dollars to be made in knocking something down and building something new, the attitude is: Let's do it."

ATLANTA'S relentlessly commercial attitude has, however, been the key to its extraordinary success. Atlanta has always looked to the future, occasionally selling itself as something it was not but managed, miraculously, to become. It deliberately set out to have the capital moved from Milledgeville to Atlanta, in 1868, by offering to build the state government whatever buildings it wanted within the next ten years. The scheme worked: Milledgeville is now a small, handsome, antebellum town, and Atlanta is a rich suburban metropolis. In 1926, Atlanta built an airport in the hope of becoming a major federal postal route and then wooed the Postmaster General until he agreed to the plan. In 1964, the city built a sports stadium even though it had no team, and used the stadium to lure the Milwaukee Braves to the South. And now the city has sold itself to the International Olympic Committee as a world capital, though it is still a fairly provincial Southern city. Yet by hosting the Games it may become the international center it claims to be. As one writer has put it, "If New York is the Big Apple, and New Orleans is the Big Easy, Atlanta is the Big Hustle."

In fact, the city's business-minded pragmatism is probably what prevented it from becoming the site of riots during the sixties. The business community decided that it would be bad for the city's image if it should turn into the next Selma or Birmingham, and urged the white-dominated government to compromise on integration. The city's black leaders have followed in this pragmatic tradition, working hard to keep Atlanta's white business community happy. Not surprisingly, their attitude toward development and historic preservation has been similar. In 1980, Atlanta's first black mayor, Maynard Jackson, allowed the gorgeous turn-of-the-century Carnegie Library to be demolished and replaced with a functional but anonymous-looking concrete building. When the civil-rights leader Andrew Young was mayor, in the late eighties, he favored a demolition program in order to encourage A.T. & T. to build a major office tower in midtown. Slated for destruction was a building known as the Castle, a stone pseudo fortress that is one of the relatively few early-twentieth-century mansions left in midtown. "Why would anyone want to keep that hunka junk?" Young said, in a remark that typified Atlanta's growth strategy. A compromise was worked out that allowed A.T. & T. to build its tower—a postmodern skyscraper—but spared the "hunka junk," which sits empty and unused, looking rather out of place, on the corner of Peachtree and Fourteenth Streets, just a few blocks up from the Dump. It was Young, perhaps still smarting from criticism prompted by his cavalier remark, who in 1989 allowed the Mitchell house to be declared a historic landmark.



"That was my horse. He's in a whole passel of trouble, and I gotta go."

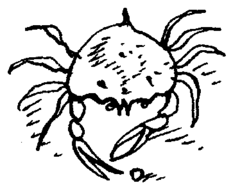
THIS was the first significant victory for Mary Rose Taylor, the chairman of the Margaret Mitchell House, Inc., foundation, who has championed the efforts to save the house. Taylor looks like a typical Buckhead society matron: a former University of North Carolina homecoming queen, she is tall, blond, carefully coiffed, and married to a successful real-estate developer. But she considers herself a product of the sixties and the civil-rights movement. A former television journalist, she worked for "60 Minutes" in the late sixties, was once married to the talk-show host Charlie Rose, and has been an anchorwoman for one of Atlanta's main television stations. She played an important role in Mayor Campbell's 1994 election campaign. "I see the Mitchell house and the debate surrounding it as a symbol of Atlanta's inability to deal with its past," she says. "I want to use the past to stimulate greater candor about racial relations, not to glorify the antebellum South."

Taylor had never read "Gone with the Wind" before moving to Atlanta, in 1980, and hadn't seen the movie since her first date, at the age of sixteen, in 1961. She didn't learn about the existence of the house until 1987, and was surprised to discover that there was no monument commemorating Mitchell. After all, the book has sold some thirty million copies, and the movie has been seen by hundreds of millions. Along with Coca-Cola, "Gone with the Wind" has been Atlanta's most successful export product and is potentially one of its biggest tourist attractions. (Gung-ho tourists have been known to visit Oakland Cemetery in search of the grave of Scarlett O'Hara.)

Mitchell's apartment house on Peachtree and Tenth Street dates back to 1899, Taylor tells me. Mitchell moved into an apartment on the ground floor in 1925 (she was a writer for the Atlanta *Journal* at the time), and she wrote most of "Gone with the Wind" there, before moving out, in 1932. "It was an elegant nineteenth-century home," Taylor says. "This area was still very attractive and fashionable when Margaret lived here. She called it the Dump, but that was part of her off-the-cuff humor. She referred to her office as the Black Hole of Calcutta and to the café where she ate lunch as the Roachery."

The house became a hippie hangout in the sixties, and in 1979 it was abandoned. In her effort to save it, Taylor formed a not-for-profit organization in 1990. "Andy Young advised me to form a board that was fifty per cent African-American and sixty per cent female," Taylor says. "But I think I probably would have done that anyway. Margaret Mitchell was born into a segregated Atlanta and died in a segregated Atlanta. We have no intention of hiding that, but we also want to show how she evolved over the course of her life."

When Mitchell attended Smith College, after the First World War, she protested vehemently upon being put in the same classroom with a black student. But in the last years of her life she quietly gave scholarship money for students at Morehouse College, one of Atlanta's best black schools, and also worked to improve conditions in one of the city's black hospitals. (Dr. Otis Smith, a physician who is vice-chairman of the Mitchell-house board of trustees, was a beneficiary of those scholarships.) "As a journalist, I was interested in sorting out what is myth and what is fact," Taylor says. "People have a hard time separating the book from the movie. Only about a hundred pages of the book take place on the plantation; all the rest takes place in Atlanta. The book was written in the twenties, a time of wealth and plenty, but it came out during the Depression, and its story of people overcoming defeat made a huge impression on people. When it first came out, in 1936, it was a huge success, both popular and critical, and won the Pulitzer Prize. It was banned in Nazi Germany and in the Iron Curtain countries, because it was seen as a celebration of the individual over the state." Taylor sees the book as the story of Atlanta itself, a city that overcame adversity and rebuilt itself from the ashes of war. While not everyone will agree with her comparison of it to "War and Peace," the book is vastly superior to the vapid caricature presented in the movie. It contains much sharp-eyed social satire, and in many ways Scarlett O'Hara—energetic and superficial, resourceful and unscrupulous—is a symbol of Atlanta and the New South, determined never to go hungry again.



After the house received landmark designation, Taylor had trouble finding corporate sponsors for the renovation. But when the building was hit by its first fire, in 1994, she was able to persuade the German automaker Daimler-Benz to contribute four and a half million dollars to redo it. Local American businesses appear reluctant to associate themselves with a project that some perceive as a symbol of racism, but, despite mixed feelings in the black community, three Atlanta mayors—Young, Jackson (who returned to office in 1990), and Campbell—have all stood by it, with characteristic Atlantan pragmatism. If a German company wants to invest several million dollars in creating a lucrative tourist attraction in our city, why fight it? The building was set to reopen this summer along with the Olympic Games—until the recent arson.

ALTHOUGH the house was insured and Taylor fully intends to rebuild, the fire has renewed the discussion about an issue that had appeared settled. "I was not sorry to see The Margaret Mitchell Home burn to the ground," Pearl Cleage, a prominent Atlanta playwright, declared in a controversial article in *The Atlanta Tribune*, a local black magazine. "I don't know who did it. I've never advocated arson, and I was out of town when the blaze ignited. But, I was, in fact, delighted that someone had taken direct action against what I consider to be an insult of monumental proportions to African-American people." Cleage was particularly upset that the Mayor had offered public money to help catch the perpetrator and that, in his public expressions of distress, he had seemed to compare the Mitchell-house fire to Sherman's burning of Atlanta. "We've been scarred by fire in the past," the Mayor said. "We've risen from it and we'll go forward again."

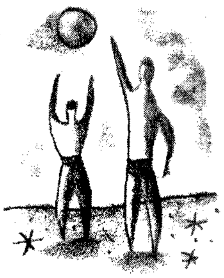
"He can't be talking about that time Gen. Sherman marched through Georgia as part of the effort to defeat the Confederacy, and with it, the institution of slavery, can he?" Cleage wrote.

After the article, Cleage says, she received numerous phone calls from blacks, saying, "Thank God somebody said that." She says, "I told them, 'Why don't you say so publicly?' The whole Mitchell-house business epitomizes the contradictions of Atlanta. You can't expect conscious black people to be happy about a memorial to something that glorifies a time when we were slaves. But there's this Southern politeness, and no one says what they really think."

Like most people in Atlanta, Cleage, a light-skinned black woman in her forties with close-cropped hair, came from somewhere else. She grew up in Detroit and moved here in 1969, with her first husband, Michael Lomax, who is now one of the city's leading radical black politicians. She graduated from Spelman College, Atlanta's prestigious college for black women, and threw herself into the city's political life. "It was a wonderful time. Maynard Jackson was deputy mayor, and it was clear that he was going to be the city's next mayor," she tells me over coffee at a diner on Peachtree and Fourteenth. "It looked as if black people were finally going to run their city and take control of their destiny. I volunteered for Jackson's campaign, and he then made me his press secretary. After a few years, I ran screaming from City Hall. We were the political majority, but the economic structure was still firmly in the hands of white males. I was bothered by the speed with which Atlanta's black leaders became comfortable with this. They quickly developed the mentality that Atlanta's white leaders had always had: If it's good for business, it's good for Atlanta."

The Mitchell house seems to Cleage a part of this tradition—what she views as black Atlanta turning itself inside out to please the white business establishment. "The fact that there are black people on the Mitchell-house board is a complete Atlanta moment, typical of the weird alliances that occur in this city," she says. "This is a city with huge problems. Poverty, kids who graduate from high school who can't read, drugs, unemployment, teen pregnancy. But that city receives very little attention. The problem is not how do we create a city with no poor people but how do we get them off the streets for the Olympics." In fact, Atlanta's Task Force for the Homeless has helped several plaintiffs win a court injunction against the city for sweeping the homeless off the streets in recent months. "Everybody here, black and white, sounds like the president of the chamber of commerce," Cleage goes on. "When I first moved here, I lived in a building with a lot of little old black ladies who had grown up in segregation and were totally illiterate, but when it came to Atlanta it would be 'Let's pretend that Atlanta is a perfect paradise.' If all the effort that goes into making Atlanta *seem* like the perfect place went into actually making Atlanta a perfect place, we would be a hell of a lot better off."

Despite her firebrand views about the Mitchell house, Cleage is as polite as the moderate black leaders she criticizes. Although she declined to become a consultant to the Mitchell-house project, she did meet with Taylor and one of the researchers preparing an exhibition at the house, so that the exhibition would take into account black hostility to "Gone with the Wind." Cleage, whether she likes it or not, is part of Atlanta's impressive black power élite. She complains about the city's relentless boosterism, but as we end our conversation she gives way to a sudden burst of civic pride: "There are so many smart, strong black people here. If we can't fix things in Atlanta, we're in real trouble. I'm going to keep making a fuss until they do it right."



In many ways, black Atlanta has done a better job of preserving its past than the white population has. In the early fifties, the Metropolitan Atlanta Planning Commission proposed bulldozing Auburn Avenue, sometimes referred to as "black Peachtree," which was the site of many thriving black businesses, churches, and middle-class homes, including the house where Martin Luther King, Jr., was born and the Ebenezer Baptist Church, where both he and his father preached. The black community protested the development plan vigorously, and John Wesley Dobbs, one of the city's black leaders, made an impassioned speech in favor of saving the street. "The acquisition of this kind of wealth along Auburn Avenue has caused us to call it Sweet Auburn, a name known among Negroes throughout America as a symbol of the development of Negro business in Atlanta," he said. "Your proposed plan would destroy . . . two generations of sweat and toil." The speech helped turned the tide against the demolition plan.

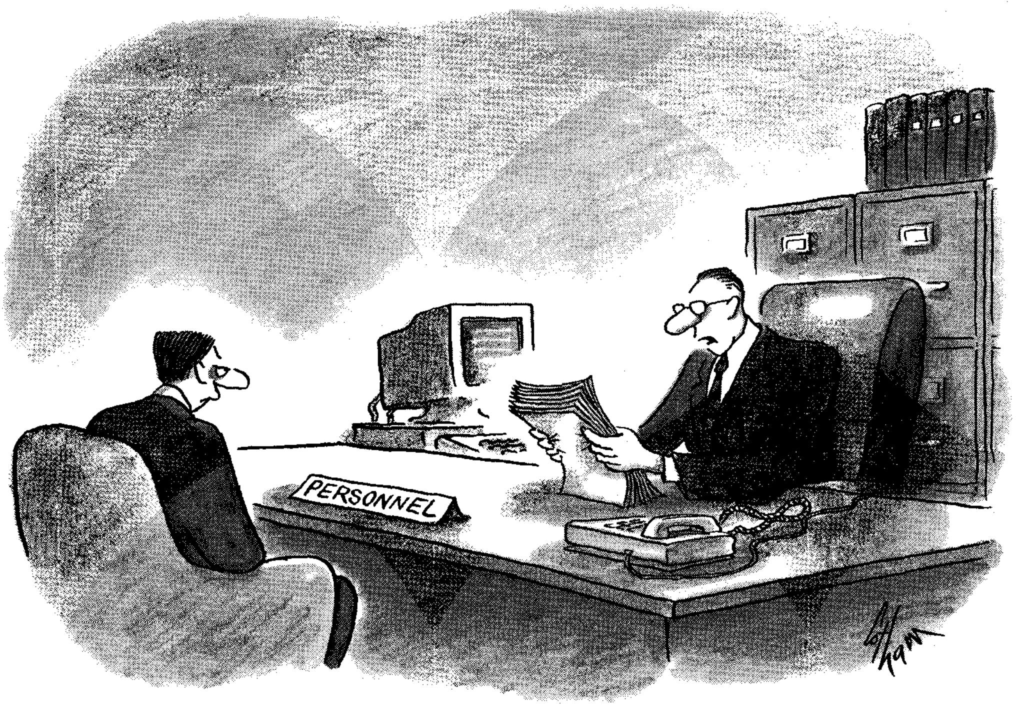
Nevertheless, during the seventies and eighties Auburn Avenue gradually deteriorated, even during the tenure of Mayor Jackson, who is Dobbs's grandson. Black Atlantans moved out to the suburbs, creating their own subdivisions, tract houses, and imitation antebellum mansions south and west of the city, which mirror those to the north and east in everything but the skin color of their inhabitants. Many of the buildings around the King home—handsome Victorian and Queen Anne-style houses—became dilapidated.

Recently, however, Auburn Avenue has been enjoying a significant renaissance. Many of the houses on the blocks near the King home have been renovated in the last few years. The renovations were not sponsored by the Olympic Committee, but the city's political leaders were able to use the deadline of the Games to lobby Congress. "We flew up to Washington and met with every senator and congressman we could get in to see," recalls Shirley Franklin, a black woman in her fifties who is a senior policy adviser on the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games and, before that, was the chief aide to Andrew Young at City Hall. "We said, 'How is it going to look when we have millions of people coming from around the world and the whole area around the King Center is in this condition?' " Franklin's contingent got a special appropriation of eleven million dollars for the Parks Service, which built a visitors' center, containing a well-presented overview of King's life and career. Another two million dollars has gone into renovating the houses nearby, and the Parks Service was careful not to displace the old tenants: several wizened black ladies now sit out on their porches watching as armies of tourists march up and down Auburn.

Although Sweet Auburn has become a kind of public showcase of black Atlanta, the renovations there have had a positive ripple effect in the surrounding neighborhood, where young black professionals have started to move in. Until recently, however, in the eyes of black Atlanta old usually did not mean good. "Take the Fox Theatre as an example," Franklin says, referring to the Moorish-style theatre on Peachtree, which barely escaped the demolition that the other major theatres suffered. "There was strong sentiment for tearing it down. It was a segregated theatre, and black people had to sit up in the balcony. But Maynard [Jackson] felt that it had an architectural value that had to be saved. I think that was a turning point. People realized that we can build something new and functional and be more respectful of the old."

Franklin participated in the original

debate over saving the Margaret Mitchell house. “Andy Young felt it was important to keep the building,” she says. “But I would not encourage including ‘Gone with the Wind’ in the opening ceremonies of the Olympics. The Margaret Mitchell house and the Cyclorama have a place in Southern history that we need to understand.”



“This is a very impressive manifesto.”

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The Cyclorama—a huge circular painting of the Battle of Atlanta—is an example of a successful mastering of the past. When I first visited Atlanta, in 1982, the painting had appeared to me to be an unabashed apologia for the Confederacy. Housed in a neoclassical pavilion in Grant Park, it is exhibited in a huge revolving auditorium, so the audience is gradually led through the narrative of the battle. The show is preceded by a brief introductory video, and on my first visit the video was hopelessly one-sided and full of references to brave Rebel charges repelling the Northern intruders: the Confederates seemed to win every battle, so it nearly came as a surprise when you heard that Atlanta had fallen and was cruelly burned to the ground. But I visited the Cyclorama again last month, and this time, as the video began, I heard the unmistakable baritone of the black actor James Earl Jones. The narration was far more measured, and the battle was presented simply as a piece of military history. Afterward, a black attendant made a short speech, pointing out various things in the painting, including the fact that there was only one black figure visible, even though there had been some two hundred thousand black soldiers fighting for the Union cause. She also pointed out that the painting had been commissioned by a Northern officer who had fought in the battle (depicted heroically charging on a brave steed toward the line of fire) and hoped to use the picture to launch a campaign for Vice-President. Thus the black government of Atlanta has subtly altered the Cyclorama by historicizing it, defusing what had been a hot political issue when the painting was in need of major restoration, in the early seventies. Jackson’s press secretary at the time, Pearl Cleage, advocated tearing it down. Jackson decided otherwise, and that precedent was critical in his decision to save the Mitchell house, as he later told Mary Rose Taylor. “I asked Maynard why he was so clear about all this,” Taylor says, “and he told me this story: ‘When I was struggling with the Cyclorama restoration, an old black politician, John Calhoun, came up to me and said, “Maynard, let’s not lose perspective on this. Just remember who won the war.” ’ ”

BEFORE leaving Atlanta, I paid a call on Harold Hudgins, one of the men who have done the most to determine the look of modern Atlanta. Hudgins is the president of Hudgins & Company, Demolition Specialists—the company that demolished the old railroad station, the Loew’s Grand Theatre, the old Atlanta Brewery, the Whitehead Building, the Atlanta Peachtree Arcade, Concordia Hall, the Forsythe Building, the old Governor’s Mansion, and at least a couple of apartment buildings where Margaret Mitchell once lived. “I figure we’ve probably wrecked eighty per cent of the buildings in Atlanta,” he says.

Hudgins is a native Georgian whose family has lived in De Kalb County since 1835, and he still lives there, about eight miles east of downtown Atlanta, in the town of Decatur. His offices are in a barren old industrial area of Atlanta that has the look of a junk yard. Here lie the remains of the city’s architectural past. In a lot outside the company’s back door sits a wooden gazebo from a house he recently tore down. “Actually found a buyer for that,” he says. Inside, chandeliers from some of Atlanta’s finest homes hang from the ceiling in the waiting room, which is decorated in antique linoleum and fake wood panelling. Hudgins, who is almost seventy, is tall and rangy and still vigorous-looking. He began working with his father when he was eleven, and he has a folksy redneck manner that masks a degree in business administration and a considerable amount of native shrewdness.

“My father wrecked his first building in 1928,” he tells me. “It was the Arragon Hotel. He had no experience in that kind of work, and I once asked him why he did it. ‘Because I like to eat,’ he said.” Nearly half a century later—in 1973, two years after his father’s death—Hudgins was asked to destroy the Collier Building, which had replaced the Arragon. “It was a five-story building of reinforced concrete,” he recalls. “I was wandering down in the basement and I saw a large object that said ‘Arragon Hotel.’ It was the cornerstone of the old building, the first my father wrecked. I kept that." More preservation-minded than most Atlantans, Hudgins has saved bits and pieces of many of the buildings he has razed. "I collect heads," he says. "I'm talking about gargoyles. Don't find much of that anymore."

Reviewing with Hudgins the main demolition projects of his career is like studying the architectural history of Atlanta in reverse. He remembers the Kimball House hotel ("It was a very well-made building—took a hundred and five days to demolish") and Concordia Hall: "A four-story brick structure, very—what's the word?—ornate. Built after Sherman came through. That's where Woodrow Wilson practiced law. I wish I had saved pieces of all of them."

Does he regret tearing down so many beautiful buildings? "We don't make the decisions—we are just the doers of the dastardly deed," he replies. "I don't believe that it would have made economic sense to renovate all those buildings. Obviously, the people who made the decision to pull the plug did so on an economic basis." But in the last fifteen years Hudgins has been getting fewer wrecking jobs and more requests for limited demolition, as part of renovation. "It changed because we started giving tax write-offs to people to renovate buildings rather than tear them down," he explains. "Just about everything in life has an economic factor."

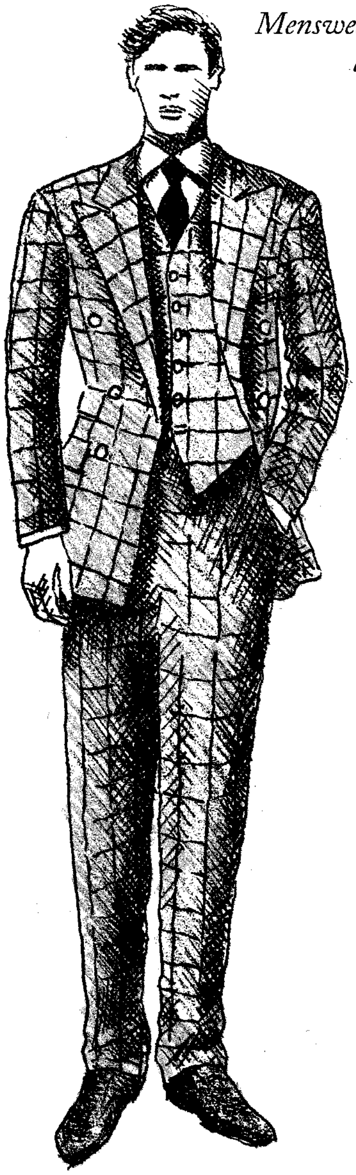
As he shows me out, Hudgins takes me to see some remains of the Loew's Grand Theatre, where "Gone with the Wind" had its world première, in 1939. He saved thirty-five thousand bricks from the old building; he has kept them for eighteen years. Now Hudgins' moment has arrived, along with Atlanta's: he wants to market the bricks as souvenirs. "Problem is, I'm just getting this thing going. I'm a year too late. The story of my life." He hands me a brochure. He has formed a company called Historic Keepsakes, Inc., and plans to sell the bricks for $49.95 each. If he sells all of them, the proceeds will come to $1,748,250. "A grand piece of Atlanta's past," the brochure reads, "a Gone With the Wind memento, a must for collectors, or perhaps a distinctive gift for the person 'who has everything.' Each brick . . . comes with a notarized Certificate of Authenticity."

Let the Games begin. ♦

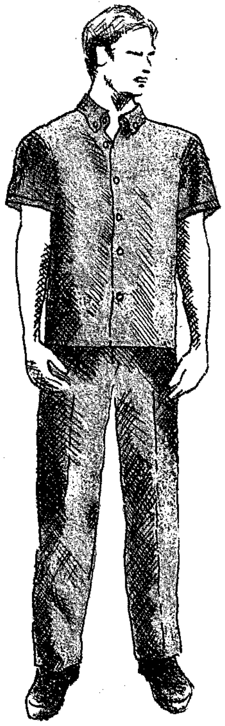
SKETCHBOOK · BY MICHAEL ROBERTS

LOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

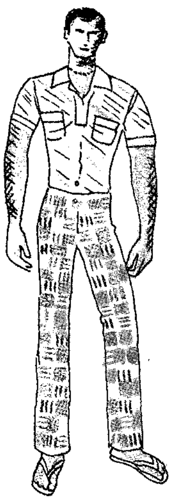
A Preview of the New York Menswear Collections for Spring and Summer '97



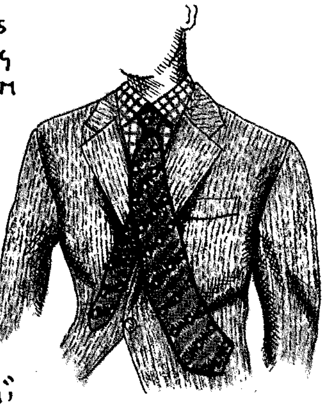
RALPH LAUREN'S TWEEDY LINEN SUIT FOR NEXT SPRING MASQUERADES AS A WINTRY-LOOKING THREE-PIECE FROM A PREVIOUS ERA.



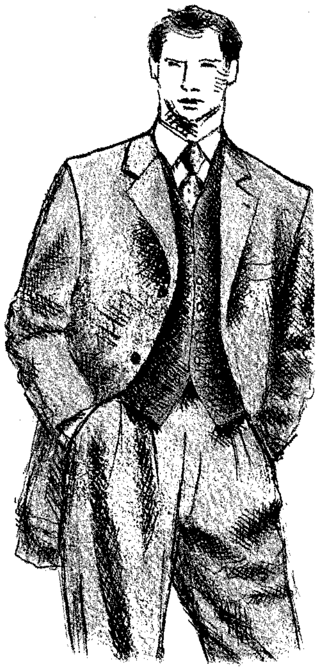
THE MODELS AT A CASTING IN RICHARD EDWARDS' SOHO SHOWROOM TRY ON SOME NINETEEN-FIFTIES-STYLE SHIRTS AND MATCHING TROUSERS. "I LOOK LIKE A GAS-PUMP ATTENDANT," SAYS THADEUS FROM FORD MEN.



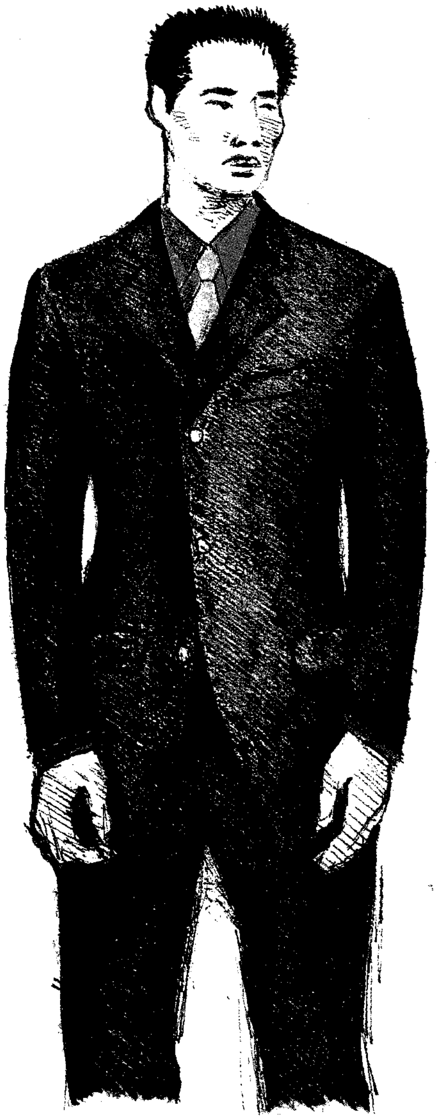
THE DESIGNER GENE MEYER'S SEE-THROUGH NYLON SHIRTS, PATTERNED PANTS, FLIP-FLOPS, AND GOLD NECK CHAINS REMIND HIM OF CERTAIN MEN HE ONCE SAW IN ROME.



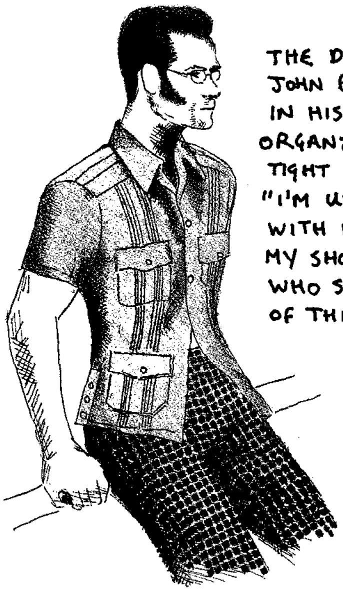
"SOOP! IS ALWAYS IN A MORE PLAYFUL MOOD FOR SPRING," SAYS HIS P.R., EXPLAINING WHY THE DESIGNER WILL BE SHOWING TIES DANGLING OUTSIDE SUIT JACKETS AS A TREND.



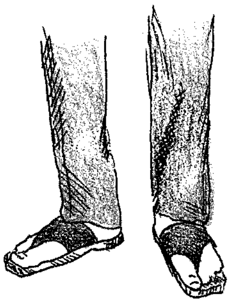
"IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO LOOK AT SYNTHETICS FOR SUMMER," SAYS JOSEPH ABBOUD, WHOSE TRADITIONALLY STYLED COLLECTION RUNS THE GAMUT FROM BEIGE TO GRAY.



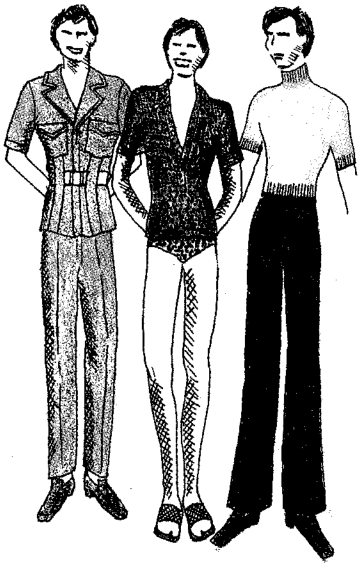
CALVIN KLEIN MATCHES A JADE ACETATE SUIT WITH A PARROT-GREEN SHIRT AND A PALM-GREEN TIE. "AREN'T THESE COLORS WILD?" EXCLAIMS CALVIN.



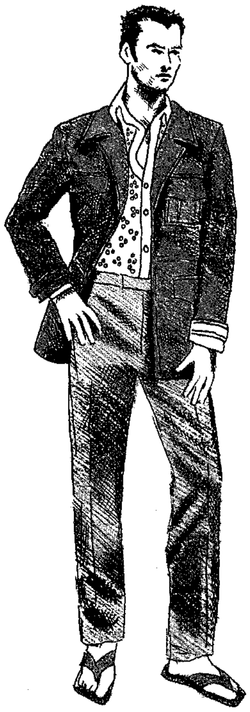
THE DESIGNER JOHN BARTLETT POSES IN HIS "CUBANO"-STYLE ORGANZA SHIRT AND TIGHT CHECKED TROUSERS. "I'M USING BEEFY MEN WITH BODY HAIR IN MY SHOW," SAYS BARTLETT, WHO SHARES SOMETHING OF THIS LOOK HIMSELF.



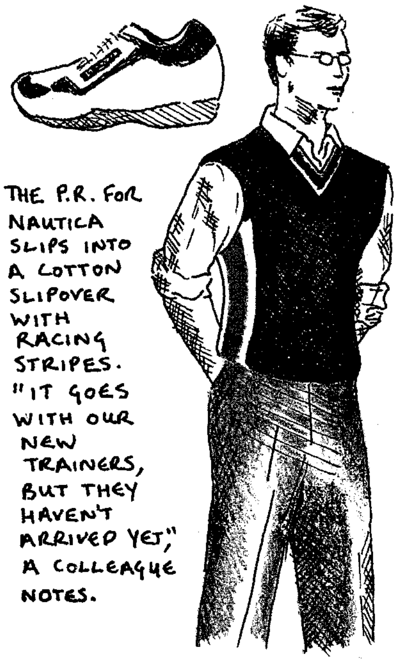
FLIP-FLOPS AND SANDALS WITH SUITS: A GENERAL TREND.



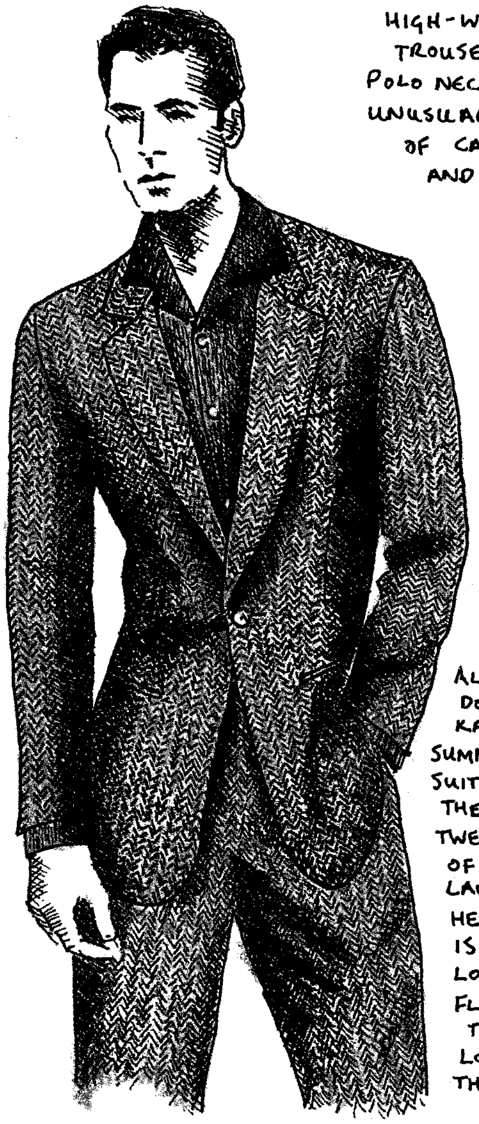
"MY LOOK IS A KIND OF SEVENTIES HELMUT BERGER MEETS SIMON TEMPLAR THING," SAYS THE DESIGNER RICHARD TYLER OF HIS SAFARI SUITS, STRETCH SHIRTS OVER SWIMSUITS, HIGH-WAISTED TROUSERS, AND POLO NECKS IN AN UNUSUAL BLEND OF CASHMERE AND NYLON.



"WE DO FUNKY CLOTHES," SAYS ANDY, BROTHER OF TOMMY HILFIGER, WHO HANGS OUT WITH ROCKERS LIKE METALLICA. THE HILFIGER "ROCK-AND-ROLL SAFARI LOOK" THEREFORE INVOLVES A GREEN SUÈDE JACKET AND BLUE SUÈDE FLIP-FLOPS.



THE P.R. FOR NAUTICA SLIPS INTO A COTTON SLIPOVER WITH RACING STRIPES. "IT GOES WITH OUR NEW TRAINERS, BUT THEY HAVEN'T ARRIVED YET," A COLLEAGUE NOTES.



ALTHOUGH DONNA KARAN'S SUMMER LINEN SUIT ECHOES THE MOCK TWEEDINESS OF RALPH LAUREN'S, HER CUT IS MORE LORDS OF FLATBUSH THAN LORD OF THE MANOR.

FICTION

AN INTELLECTUAL FATHER

Duty and delight in a modern proposal.

BY ELIZABETH JOLLEY

THE rod and the spray of the shower droop. The Professor, shy in his nakedness in a strange bathroom, has to crouch. He fumbles for the soap. As it slips between his searching fingers he wishes that the conference were over and that he could be on his way home sipping a well-named, suitably chilled white wine and reading a stupid novel. He would be pleasantly half asleep, he thinks, lulled by the noise of the plane and the presence of an elderly colleague, familiar and undemanding, in the seat beside his.

It is never easy, he knows, to adjust the hot water in a different place. He shivers under the tepid sprinkling and is shocked a few minutes later at his own unattractive appearance, the ruthless mirrors offering hitherto unknown aspects of his body. Inexperience causes some delay in finding the bath towels. Forgetful, having unpacked some things and not others, afraid of being late, he dresses in a hurry. He thinks someone is entering the room, but it is merely his own reflection in yet another mirror, full length, on the inside of the door.

There is, too, an ever-present feeling that his room is on the ground floor, though it is, in fact, on the twenty-ninth. The room has the solid appearance of being on the ground floor. The walls above the dark panelling of polished wood are a rich olive green. There are deep window seats and an enormous writing desk of the same dark polished wood. The desk is covered with tooled leather and there are soft leather folders arranged on it. A thorough determination toward good taste is evident in the five leather armchairs and the picture frames, which are ornamental, containing paintings of flowers and restful landscapes. The lamps, five in all, are of polished brass. He supposes there is a television, discreetly hidden. The room gives the impression that it has been designed to welcome a male guest.

He has slept well but lacks the expected refreshment of sleep. This morning his head cold reaches its zenith with fourteen earth-shattering sneezes; a sort of sonnet in fourteen harrowing lines containing in their shortness the necessary touch of philosophy, as he tells himself later, the sneezes are an indication that he is, to use one of his wife's phrases, on the mend.

Haunted now by the memory of his ordered breakfast the day before, he leaves with cautious steps and backward glancings, and, closing his door carefully, approaches the elevators. He wishes, during the rapid journey downward to what he hopes will be a simple breakfast, that he had not made the strange arrangement for later on, in the evening. He thinks of it, with some apprehension, as an appointment with the flesh.

THERE are many difficulties connected with long-distance travelling and involvement with conferences. One of these difficulties is indecision. Normally able to make up his mind about something quite quickly, he wastes time wondering which tie to wear with which shirt and whether to order room service or to go down to the hotel dining room. He is ashamed to admit to himself that he wastes energy on such trivial matters. He supposes it is because he is removed from the familiar. His desk at home in his study, and his desk in his office at the university, and bookshelves in both places enable him to pass easily through any moments of inactivity. There is nothing in the expensive, elaborate folders on the hotel-room desk to satisfy his restless prowlings. As for his own slim folder, prepared for the conference, it would not do to glance through this. A last-minute fit of indecision would cause him to feel he should completely rethink and rewrite his lecture before the afternoon, and this would mean telephoning his wife, long-distance, for notes and references for an entirely different presentation.

It is during these short but seemingly endless times between conference meals and events that his mind descends toward a depth of uneasiness that borders on depression.

Alone in his room once more, the Professor stands as close to the window as the deep ledge will allow. Not able to bear looking down to the street below, he stares at the different levels of the rooftops. All are covered with stains and ugly rough patches. Some are littered with coils of old rope and wire. Others are piled with rusty metal boxes and containers, perhaps mysterious paraphernalia for maintenance. People inside the building cannot know what reposes above their ceilings. In one direction he can see trees and a small park. In another, there is a pattern of railway lines disappearing toward a distant horizon that might contain mountains, rivers, the ocean, other cities, other universities, other hotels.

Yesterday, his first morning in the hotel, his dish of prunes and a serving of bacon and eggs were brought to his room on a trolley draped with spotless white tablecloths. It was decorated with fresh flowers, fruit, and champagne. The young waiter proudly showed him the hot oven within the trolley, a massive dish of bacon and eggs, sausages, chops, mushrooms, and fried tomatoes. The Bakery Basket contained rolls, whole-meal and white, croissants, muffins, and toast. There was, as well, a plate with butter, jam, and honey. The dish of prunes would have supplied a whole family. The Professor, greatly embarrassed, waited while the young waiter explained the breakfast and exploded the champagne. He is still embarrassed and would like to forget the experience.

He paces across the clean wasteland of carpet and goes once more into the small private bathroom to take a last critical look at himself in the bright light. It seems, all at once, that his large, slightly hooked nose is fleshier, even rather coarse. He supposes this is the result of advancing years and frequent glasses of wine. He wonders if the great philoso-

FILIP PAGOWSKI

phers, in the past, worried about their noses.

A gastric uneasiness, which often accompanies him when travelling, is worse this time, especially when he contemplates the extraordinary request and the agreement. An agreement given all too rapidly. He supposes he was flattered. He thinks of his wife. Though she was present during the particular conversation, at this moment she seems remote. It is as if he were unable to think of her name, as if the request from the two women in his department had intruded. All he can recall now is the automatic way in which she, his wife, at the time unfolded some cream-colored fine woollen material and, after some silent mental calculations, set about sketching some little patterns on clean transparent paper, which, with deft movements, she pinned to the cloth in readiness for the special work of cutting out.

She had the cloth by her, she explained, as she took out her dressmaking scissors. She had the cloth by her; he remembers everything she said on that afternoon. There was very little discussion, it being thought that further talk could continue when Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca and the Professor himself were all in the same hotel attending the same conference.

Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca are frequent visitors. In the department, friendships grow and blossom. They die and grow again in different directions. But Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca have been sharing an apartment and a small car for some time and are regarded by others as being a couple (and not simply for economic reasons). One is never invited without the other, and both entertain visitors, that sort of thing; they entertain visitors together. They often ask if they can visit the Professor and Hazel. Hazel, in her jovial way, says of course, they can come Sunday afternoons and help wash the family car or weed the front garden, these being Hazel's things to do on Sundays.

She had the cloth by her, Hazel told them more than once. And he has in his mind, forever, the image of her perseverance with her self-imposed, almost automatic, task. He seems even now to hear her quick intake of breath as she smooths and folds and cuts, wielding the scissors with a kind of grace, neatly rounding small curves and nipping delicately at what she calls the notches.

It never ceases to amaze him, even after many years, his wife's accuracy in cutting out. As a well-made garment depends very much on the way in which it is cut out in the first place. And he knows that there is no way in which, if the cutting out is badly done, it can be put right later.

It gives him pleasure to think of this as a possible metaphor for use in a lecture. Certainly it is applicable to the paper he is to deliver at the end of the afternoon. His title—or perhaps "topic" is a better word—"Conscious and Conscience." His theme being that the human individual is conscious from birth but conscience has to be developed by example, by cherishing and by teaching. And then, later, by experience and challenge and the awareness brought about by the quiet and unseen drama of internal rites of passage. And who can do this, he will question, who can do this more satisfactorily than the writers of poetry, drama, and fiction? He has, in his lecture notes, examples from Thomas Traherne and John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, in the seventeenth century, to the poets of the present time.

Depending on his audience (he is always careful not to offend conference visitors; for example, a group of kindly middle-aged English teachers or a handful of nuns from a teaching order), he sometimes describes Rochester's terrible death, a punishment in itself—"an ulcer in his bladder is broken, and he pisses matter, he is in extreme pain," as described in a letter, June, 1680, from Gilbert Burnet to the Earl of Halifax; and sometimes he leaves out the report, concentrating on the development of conscience mentioned in the same letter, wherein Burnet writes that he, Lord Rochester, after a life of debauchery "has expressed great remorse for his past ill life . . . and dies a serious penitent and professes himself a Christian."

The precise use of the cutting-out scissors can be seen as a metaphor for the early and correct shaping of the child before he becomes a man. The metaphor becomes even more significant if the garments being shaped are simple little gowns for an expected baby.

The Professor is disturbed by the request and the meeting that is to follow later this evening. Especially because of a coincidence: his intention to refer pleasantly and somewhat lightheartedly during delivery to the "happy minute," the "little death" that restores—perhaps "renews" is a better word—life and happiness. The wonderful feeling of calm, the peace after orgasm, the "little death," this traditional joke that has attracted poets over the centuries. He contemplates having to leave unmentioned references of this sort, in view of the presence of Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca, and their expectations.

When he was preparing the paper earlier, he had no knowledge of the idea being cherished by both Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca. He would prefer to keep the reference to the "little death" in his lecture. He thinks of it as something very tender in life and in poetry. It is not always attainable. It is something to laugh over lovingly in secret, a private joke for lovers, and a time, too, for the gentle laughter of consolation and future promise in the face of failure.

THE Professor, sitting through the morning sessions of the conference, is making small neat notes in the margins of his pages. He likes to make flattering reference, when it is his turn, to the earlier speakers. He has to confess, somewhere inside himself, that his thoughts are wandering from the earnest deliveries, these being mostly from young academics with too much prepared material. His own paper is to be something of an intellectually entertaining reward for everyone at the end of the long day. He glances quickly at the rows on either side of him but is not able to see Dr. Florence or her friend Ms. Bianca. Aware of his own inattention, he tries to look as if he were listening.

HE often wonders if he resembles his predecessor. He never met the man. He has always suspected that this was chiefly because of the university's policy—"penchant" might be a better word (he easily imagines the indiscreet salivation at the boardroom table)—for saving money; the new head of the department, himself in this instance, not being appointed until a year after the retirement of the previous head. The outcome is, of course, that the members of the department, accustomed to being without a head, take very little notice of him in departmental matters. He is not clear whether this is because of a carefree, happy, unsupervised year or whether it is, in fact, a reflection on the attitudes and the ways of this other man. He is not able to remember now the other man's name.

Often vague thoughts cross his mind between lines of poetry, which come to him, unbidden, at surprisingly frequent intervals. One particular thought is that, in the eyes of the department, he is of no consequence. He is hopeless, he knows, over money matters and is secretly grate-

Victoria Roberts

"Now that I've got it, what, exactly, do I do with my newfound strength?"

• •

ful that others in the department know exactly what their funding is and how to keep this rolling (their phrase).

Feeling restless, he leaves his place in the auditorium and goes to a side door that is marked as a way out. As two speakers are exchanging places at the lectern, his leaving will not be noticed. It is half past twelve and his turn is not until four-forty-five. Plenty of time for a short walk and for ambivalent thoughts about his prepared discourse.

Outside the side door there is a smooth path, between well-kept lawns and flower beds, leading to an ornamental lake that has a bridge over the narrow end. The Professor, breathing in the fragrance of grass and water, feels refreshed.

As Chloris full of harmless thought
Beneath the willows lay . . .

He thinks of the poets long ago who were inspired to write from rural scenes—even though this one is contrived and artificial. He pauses on the little bridge and looks across the rippling patterns of light and shade on the surface of the water. The willow trees on the opposite bank, trailing their long thin wands and leaves in the lake, bring a continuation of the poem to his mind:

As Chloris full of harmless thought
Beneath the willows lay,
Kind love a comely shepherd brought
To pass the time away.

The Professor during desultory and nervous revisings of his lecture interrupts these thoughts and thinks instead about Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca and their intimate wish:

> The finest plans have always been spoiled by the littleness of them that should carry them out. Even Emperors cannot do it all by themselves.

That Dr. Florence could approach the subject only with this quotation was clearly an indication, at that time, that delicacy would be needed in the ensuing conversation.

From his place on the ornamental little bridge he can see the spread of water over the grass and is reminded momentarily of the demented streams in his childhood. They, the boys, often walked from the school to fields nearby, where the floodwater, spreading over the grass, shone in the sunlight and they, as one man, felt at once forced to pull off their school boots and socks and to walk with unaccustomed gentleness on this grass, temporarily submerged and soft and mysterious, beneath the escaped and sparkling water.

In the peaceful surroundings he considers yet again his favorite seventeenth-century poets, especially the poet Traherne and his poem celebrating birth:

Such Sacred Treasures are the Lims in Boys,
In which a Soul doth Dwell;
Their Organized Joynts, and Azure Veins
More Wealth include, than all the World contains.

These lines remind him that in the wishful suggestion concerning the fulfilling of a certain aspect in their lives and their relationship the two women might have overlooked the necessary accompanying feelings of love and respect. The act required of him needs that special love which embraces every detail of the two people and the life they hope to share. It is a love that promotes noble thoughts and clever ideas and is contained in the warmth of complete trust, the trust that lasts forever.

The soft grassy roundness of the bank beneath the willows opposite offers him a few moments of reflection on that particular small mound which sweetly invites and cushions the male approach:

It is the workhouse of the World's great trade;
On this soft anvil all mankind was made.

He would like to surprise, with gentleness, both women, Dr. Florence more especially, with the thoughtful words at exactly the time of his approach. He will be elated, in the presence of the women, after the successful delivery of his paper and the glasses of champagne which are to follow the final session of the conference. It is doubtful that either Dr. Florence or Ms. Bianca will be familiar with the particular lines from the poet, the infamous Rake, Wilmot, Earl of Rochester.

There is another thought, a disturbing thought. There are three people in the proposal instead of two. If Hazel is included—he lets his thoughts gallop like a horse without its rider, Hazelnut, the ancient Celtic fruit of wisdom, Hazel the wise, Hazel, his wife, with her prompt attack on the creamy material—if she is included she brings the number to four people being directly involved. Her matter-of-fact, practical approach is so different from his posy-strewn path; all the same, if an honest view is taken, it has to be understood that the whole exercise has to be looked upon with an acceptance of the result. Hazel's approach, with her cutting-out scissors, provides this acceptance. And once she is busy with her treadle sewing machine the three of them—the Professor, Dr. Florence, and Ms. Bianca—know that they are being left to amuse themselves, perhaps with theatre or concert tickets or an evening walk returning to the apartment shared by Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca, where, in the moonlight, the Professor (almost as part of the hedge) will press himself close to each woman, first one and then the other, bestowing professorial affectionate goodnight kisses.

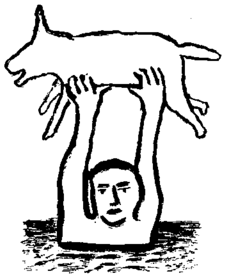
An excitement, a sense of importance, and a feeling of tenderness and wisdom—all these envelop him as he allows himself to consider in detail, but with respect, the more youthful and possibly attractive bodies of both Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca. That they want a child to bring up together is natural. He is prepared to consider and understand Hazel's reasoning, which, at the time, comes as a surprise to all of them, Hazel included. She, straightening up from the cutting out, is prepared to make the suggestion that each of the two women may want the experience. Both women should have the chance to be pregnant and to give birth to a child. Two babies, in Hazel's reasoning, would be more beneficial than one. (After all, she has enough material for a dozen little gowns.) Two babies, siblings growing up together, and both women simultaneously being fulfilled with motherhood.

Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca, having had thoughts about one child only, seem at once fully prepared to accept this new thought. The Professor, seeing the ease with which a new idea is understood and approved, congratulates, in silence, the excellent tutorial system nurtured within the department.

Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca explain once more that they want an intellectual father for their children. Apart from what they persist in describing as his "fine brain," he is very handsome. They become, during the afternoon, more excited, saying that he has beautiful hands and eyes. Especially his hands, which they insist can be compared favorably with Lytton Strachey's hands in Dora Carrington's famous 1916 portrait. He does not need to be told this, they are sure, but they are telling him all the same; they tell him, that afternoon over Hazel's willow-pattern teacups and her rock cakes, they want him to know. Also they explain that his daughters (his and Hazel's, of course) are lovely girls. A wonderful pattern—"example" would be a better word—ahead of them for their own expectations. Hazel, acknowledging the compliment, adds the wise remark that Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca can take it in turns to go to work, a sort of rostered arrangement, she says.

The Professor, resting on the little bridge with both hands on the smooth railing, closes his eyes and enjoys from memory the window in his study at home. This window is tall and narrow, filled from outside with green foliage. The white lace curtains, always freshly washed, stirred by the light breeze, float and swell, moving lightly inward and outward. This pleasant image is accompanied by thoughts of his three daughters, a whole bunch of babies, a multiple birth, unexpected yet expected, for Hazel and her sister, Clover, are twins and he is a twin himself. His daughters, they purse their pretty mouths and pout. They use lipstick with names like Anger and Lust and they discuss at the dinner table the merits of the different deodorants and tampons advertised on television.

The girls, he has several cherished images of them. They were born within minutes of each other and are now at boarding school. During holidays, when there are dinner guests, these daughters move with grace between the substantial armchairs, handing little squares of pink and yellow Turkish Delight, followed by tiny cups of black coffee, to the assembled visitors. In their simple white (princess-style) dresses, made by their mother, and the little shawls of soft gray wool, knitted by their aunt Clover, they are gentle enough to have stepped straight from a Jane Austen novel into Hazel's unplanned and rather shabby room.



The Professor, whenever he goes away, even while still at the airport before the outward journey, wishes to be at home. Trying to dismiss the cozy pictures of peaceful family life, he walks on across the little bridge as if to leave the ever-present complication of homesickness and other thoughts hovering just above the innocent water.

The well-kept lawns, during vacation, are smooth and empty of students. He wants to thank someone for the open air and the pensive sky during these minutes of freedom away from the packed hours of the conference weekend. He recalls with quiet excitement, from previous visits, that the path leads on into the wild edges of the bush. There are remembered narrow paths leading through the fragrant wilderness, a curious mixture of fallen eucalyptus trees with foliage still sprouting and often with plants growing from beneath dead branches and burned undergrowth. Hazel, if walking with him, would look with disapproval at the surroundings, declaring that a good raking out and burning was needed. Hazel is the only person he knows who can study the state of the ground and, at the same time, pay homage to the circling flight of a wedge-tailed eagle, a golden predator, the only creature able to look directly at the sun, high up in the clear blue sky above a clearing in the forest. Hazel, with her practical good sense in housekeeping, sewing, and gardening, and with knowledge about birds, has absolutely no feelings of envy or jealousy. She is never mean or bitter.

The Professor knows his own weakness: he enjoys penetrating young women with a handsome glance. He knows, too, that the glance is not always purely intellectual even though it comes from the excitement of sudden understanding. He delights in conversations in which he explains with superb literary references and a scholarly precision reaching across centuries that relationships of different kinds are acceptable if approached and conducted with civilized dignity. He is known to break off in the middle of a lecture earnestly requesting the students to name, from the floor, the most important aspects of the personality. He interrupts immediately the beginnings of a single shy response to tell the massed faces in the auditorium, Yes! yes! They are right—love and complete trust are the greatest and the most important of the characteristic human attributes.

He thinks now, during his stolen walk, of Dr. Florence and the conversation during the visit on the afternoon before they, Dr. Florence, Ms. Bianca, and he himself, left for the conference.

Dr. Florence, a valuable member of his department, is no longer young but obviously is not postmenopausal, though she must be near enough and would need a competent, reliable obstetrician, none of this "natural childbirth in a corner of a field" talked about so cheerfully by Ms. Bianca.

Dr. Florence—Florentius and Florentia, the derivation is from the Latin *florens*, he thinks, which means flowering. He smiles. Dr. Florence should have her flowering *and* her deflowering.

Dr. Florence, “Florence” is unusual for a surname. Her Christian or given name is quite ordinary, he remembers, “Betty” or something like that. . . .

Dr. Florence is the only person he knows to have parked her car on the rough grass alongside the freeway, an enormous road, the only one going east. She wants to walk there in that alien, ugly place, she explains, when asked. She wants to be familiar with the verges should her own car break down in that uninhabited place where, on both sides, there are stretches of sand and coarse grass, the territory of starving hawks and certain derelict men employed in the particular, and not unimportant, light industry wherein starved cattle bodies are reduced in cauldrons in the processing and packaging of pet foods. Whenever the Professor thinks about this, he thinks he can smell the scorched hides and the charred bones. Dr. Florence is the only person he knows who makes the fearsome right-hand turn at the first wide intersection, in order to follow a painted cardboard notice announcing that roses are growing and hidden somewhere in that barren place. She has described in detail for him the old-fashioned rose garden, a small nursery packed with plants and flowers, bedded between tiny green hedges and fenced with old pickets, overgrown and supported by bindweed and honeysuckle. A well-watered plot, she explains, a safe nest, a cradle perhaps, for propagation and cultivation.

“To become immortal and then to die”—the Professor hears his own voice with some surprise. He is alone in the silence and his voice sounds like the voice of someone old, tentative and even questioning. He has been walking for some time. He listens to the dry twigs cracking beneath his feet. It is time to turn back.

Thinking of Dr. Florence, he has to acknowledge over again that Ms. Bianca is quite a different sort of person. Ms. Bianca, in his opinion, is simply a jumped-up clerk. She is one of the many bright but uneducated women pouring into English departments all over the country, taking degrees, many of them, he thinks, without any sense of real scholarship. He is not against this; they are, he tells Hazel from time to time, admirable women. There is absolutely nothing wrong in seeking enrichment. But he fails to understand how Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca can sustain this friendship, which they clearly mean to have on an intimate and permanent basis. Children, he knows, do not necessarily hold two people together, and there are times when children drive a wedge between man and wife. He tries often to understand how Dr. Florence can need this woman, a woman who pins colored ribbons and artificial flowers, cheap ornaments and little mirrors to her skirts, and who flirts (a strong word, but he is not exaggerating) with everyone, male and female. Perhaps strangely enough with women, though Hazel remains completely unaware of the eyelids fluttering and batting in her direction.

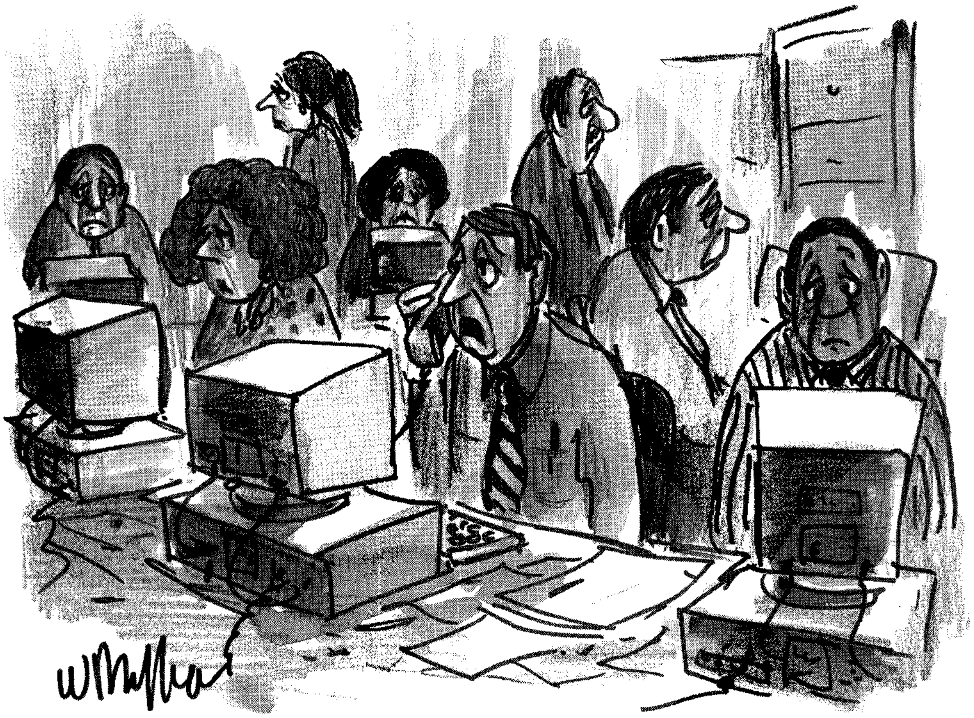
He has heard Dr. Florence, after being asked with a false shyness, painstakingly explaining in the lecture hall a metaphor that has a strong sexual meaning, when he himself explained the same one to the same questioner, Ms. Bianca, in the classroom the previous day. If comparisons are to be made, she is dishonest in the presence of Hazel’s solid honesty. Hazel is always simply Hazel and never tries to be anything she is not. He finds this restful and very boring.

Straight after giving birth (multiple), almost before the baby girls had finished their first howlings, Hazel asked for her Wellingtons. Apparently she had been setting out some small cabbages during the onset of labor, and wanted to finish the planting before nightfall.

“Hazel has both feet on the ground”; his mother-in-law, on that occasion, had made the suitable remark, which she immediately improved upon by adding, “I should say in the ground.” This same mother-in-law, with her high-pitched, pealing laugh, had said at the wedding, to her son-in-law, the Professor, that if anything happened to Hazel there was always Clover. Clover, the sister, being a twin, an exact replica—even to the tendency toward hairiness and a down on the upper lip (almost a mustache)—of Hazel.

There is in his own family and his marriage an inheritance of good health. Hazel’s mother declares often that hairy legs and arms are a sign of strength in the human individual. The Professor is aware at such times of his own lack of body hair. He hopes that he is not, with the arrangement ahead of him, open to infection.

Often during a lecture he pauses to recite in Middle English a passage from “The Canterbury Tales” (The Prologue). He knows his



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voice is measured and melodious, tender at times with little inflections of irony. He enjoys hearing his own voice. He goes on, sometimes, to explain to his audience that in Chaucer's time venereal infections were chronic and somewhat low-key, being present in most people. As people, he explains, as people, during the ages, became cleaner in their personal habits, bacteria were forced to become more virulent, thus making the infection more persistent and more savage. After a significant short pause he continues with another recitation, still in Middle English, this time from "The Nun's Priest's Tale." He goes overtime with these recitations, not noticing that a number of the students are slipping out sideways on bent legs, their shoulders hunched and their faces hidden by their hair.

Being a little out of breath with his walking, he supposes now that he no longer looks youthful. Should he, for example, with appropriate flowers, magazines, and chocolates, visit the new mothers (when the time comes), a cheerful young nurse would be sure to greet him, calling out, "Hullo, Grandpa, second door down the passage on the left." Without thinking at all, he realizes, he has presumed that Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca will be postnatal simultaneously and naturally will want to share their hospital room.

The Professor does not feel old, not at all. He knows he is slender and gentle. People, women, have told him this. One woman, at a university party, even said that, to her, he resembled the graceful young Goethe in the 1787 Tischbein painting "Goethe in the Campagna." In spite of this compliment, he is inclined to wish for a more substantial Germanic stance or, failing that, the cold, blue-eyed, thick shape of Ibsen. In spite of his melancholy brown eyes and the soft brown hair curling behind his ears, he likes the idea of the solid professorial presence. He likes to approach his house. He cultivates the dignified walk up the path. He takes care to pause before selecting his key and inserting it in the lock of the front door. He opens the door with the little flourish of ownership. There is, too, a hint that some trick of magic has just been carried out, and he steps into his entrance hall, the successful conjurer.

The little bow that accompanies the insertion of the key and the opening of the door is all a part of the restrained power of the Lover and is one of his developed consolations. Over the years he has developed—"created" is perhaps a better word—a series of consoling images and thoughts. Promising himself a poet's hat and a short cloak of some rough woollen cloth, an Austrian loden perhaps, he has smiled at reproductions of the young Goethe. Another consolation of a more realistic sort is remembering the well-brushed long hair of his three daughters. They all have a delightful way of glancing up quickly, with a little smile of shy expectation, when they are spoken to by their mother or a visitor. The hope and innocence in their faces give him pleasure as he recalls their expressions, but, at the same time, imagined fears for their future take hold of him and all at once he feels short of breath, as if he had some insidious illness hidden inside him.

He breathes in the warm, sweet fragrance of the vegetation. He is sure he can smell honey. Possibly one of the tall trees has an immense store of honey within. He has read of such things.

He thinks, with pleasure as he walks, of his forthcoming lecture. A lecture for him is like a musical performance. He has his opening phrase, his first sentence like an instrument, solo, and then with careful orchestration he brings in one point after another, little headings that will be repeated and enlarged upon during his discourse.

Part of the pleasure of giving a lecture lies in the intense moments before he enters the crowded lecture hall. Ahead of him is the sound, the rising and falling sound of many voices. The sound rises and falls and rises again, and then there is the complete silence when he enters and hears his own footsteps crossing to the lectern. This has been prepared for him with a special bright light that will shine directly on his pages. And to one side there is a sparkling glass of cold water.

But first there is his greeting, which comes easily and pleasantly, with an amusing aside sending a subdued ripple of pleased anticipation through his audience.

He is looking forward to his lecture. He loves to lecture. He starts easily, his voice rising and falling. Pausing, he looks along the rows of faces and, with a gentle thrust, he asks a question. He pauses and then answers the question at once with special sustained emphasis. And, to his immediate satisfaction, he sees heads bending forward as notes are scribbled on pages in the folders of various colors which students seem to carry everywhere. Sometimes he will invite a student up to the lectern to read aloud a certain paragraph in a text, or perhaps two students to read a dialogue. He likes the idea that he is conducting or producing a performance. For this particular evening, he has asked for a semicircle of six chairs and an additional microphone in order for six people from the audience to take part in a spontaneous discussion, beginning with a statement on the meaning of "conscious and conscience." He will walk to and fro behind the chairs, touching lightly first one shoulder and then another and, at the same time, keeping up the continuation of his lecture, including, with the perfection from long practice, the hesitant contributions from these guests who have joined him on the platform.

He, returning now, comes unexpectedly to a small clearing in the unfamiliar woodland. An unremembered place holding in its strangeness the unwelcome feeling that he is lost and must hurry to find the way back. Overhead is a patch of clear blue sky. A sighing wind emphasizes the loneliness of the place. He looks about and discovers that he is not sure from which direction he came into the clearing. He begins, in his own insignificance, to recognize that all the things in his life which he thinks he loves and respects are not of any real importance to him. He sets off, with this thought, to find the way where the undergrowth seems to offer something resembling a path.

It seems profitable, while trying to

make his way through tough stalks and sharp leaves, to think about Hazel. She is a kind woman. He is grateful to her for the ways in which she packs him off (her phrase) to concerts and theatres, to his teaching and to conferences. The sounds of her life, the sewing machine, the blender, the dishwasher, and the Electrolux, are all a welcome and a farewell. Hazel and her twin, Clover, present all too often a back view of their unattractive hips. Both emerge, straightening up from a tangle of weeds, eyes gleaming behind identical spectacles and hair spiked and frizzed by unnoticed twigs and thorns. Carrying sponge kneelers, they have the capacity for being completely absorbed in their planting and weeding. The twin smile of greeting is also one of dismissal.

The Professor, during the discomfort of his walk, wonders why he married one sister and not the other. Pausing in the thicket he feels he has married them both. He does not want to remain where he is and, at the same time, has no real wish to go home. He longs suddenly for snow-covered mountains and cities with onion spires and well-washed trams.

"Oh, I think I can be principled when necessary."

Instead of travelling on the midnight flight, the three of them—Dr. Florence, Ms. Bianca, and the Professor—are staying on at the hotel after the champagne and the final session, the dinner dance.

The Professor, trying to get back in time for his lecture, remembers that Dr. Florence, in her innocence, wears her gold-capped fountain pen like a jewel. She has no other ornament. He remembers his responsibility and crashes on through the savage undergrowth:

> Fair Chloris in a pigsty lay;
> Her tender herd lay by her. . . .
>
> Now piercèd is her virgin zone;
> She feels the foe within it.
> She hears a broken amorous groan,
> The panting lover's fainting moan,
> Just in the happy minute.

The Professor, out of breath, recalls the lines all too well. Irreverent verse, but with great truth:

> Women can with pleasure feign;
> Men dissemble still with pain.

He is dishevelled, torn and dirty, *and* late for his lecture. "Get real!" he tells himself in self-conscious student speech. The verses, he knows, should have been recited during Hazel's rock cakes and China tea that afternoon. Dr. Florence, appreciating the obscure literary approach, catching his glance and unravelling the meaning, would have come, ultimately, to an understanding.

He recalls the celebration contained in Traherne's "Salutation" and his own joy over the three little baby-girl heads neatly asleep on a flat pink sheet. He recalls even more their waking hours. There was never a time without a baby crying. He remembers scrappy, lonely meals in dirty, airless rooms. He remembers, with distaste, the noise and the smells. There were stained cloths and towels left in the bathroom together with horrible little bowls of liquid with used cotton wool floating in them. He remembers sore stitches, swollen, painful breasts, and postnatal tears.

He can imagine easily both Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca unwashed, unbrushed, and unslept, exhausted and quarrelsome, their gowns bloodstained and sour with milk. He can imagine them sobbing, blaming him, saying they have no intention of spending their lives studying the contents of babies' nappies. There is the awful thought that the two pregnancies might result in six babies and they might be boys. How could these two women rear boys? He tries to stop his thoughts. . . . When the babies are suddenly thirteen years old with enormous feet and spots . . .

IN his room on the twenty-ninth floor of the hotel the Professor is packing his case in a wild and muddled way. When the telephone rings, he recognizes Hazel's voice at once. In quick small words he asks her to telephone Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca.

"Explain I have a headache," he says. Hazel says yes, she'll do that. She tells him that she has a message for him from Dr. Florence and Ms. Bianca. Apparently it is the wrong time of the month for them. Hazel says she has confirmed a booking for him on the midnight flight. She reminds him to telephone for a taxi. In the ensuing silence Hazel tells him not to worry about the baby gowns. The machining's done, she says, and she has almost finished the ornamental herringbone stitching at the little necks and the wrists. She will, she says, send the gowns to the Salvation Army. And then she hangs up. ♦

THE ROMANTIC REVOLUTIONARY

One of the century's most original minds emerges from obscurity.

BY PAUL BERMAN

C. L. R. JAMES was always the avant-garde's avant-garde, unknown to the many, adulated by the few. It used to be that to get your hands on anything more than James's "The Black Jacobins" you had to send away to a minuscule Marxist cell in Detroit and wait patiently for a few stapled pamphlets to arrive in the mail. Then he died—it was in 1989, a revolutionary year—and, in testimony to the strictly avant quality of his life and work, his moment duly arrived. Books by and about him have been pouring out ever since. In the last few months alone, we have had "C. L. R. James: A Political Biography," by Kent Worcester (SUNY; $19.95); a volume of erudite love letters, "Special Delivery: The Letters of C. L. R. James to Constance Webb, 1939-1948," edited by Anna Grimshaw (Blackwell; $29.95); and a book of essays by nine university professors and James aficionados, "Rethinking C. L. R. James," edited by Grant Farred (Blackwell; $19.95). Still another book, a collection of James's newspaper columns and essays called "C. L. R. James on the 'Negro Question,' " edited by Scott McLemee (Mississippi; $16.95), will come out later this year.

It is a bonanza. To anyone who used to read this most unusual of authors in his days of pamphlet obscurity—there must be several hundred of us; we are a noble handful—the spectacle is wonderful to behold. And yet something about these fresh and shiny volumes makes the cultist in me rebel. On my bookshelf at home I preserve with a connoisseur's pride a mimeographed copy of the dense treatise that James, during his weeks as a Nevada handyman in 1948, wrote about Hegel, together with a battered original edition of his book about Melville—a slim little oddity, composed in prison and published by James himself in the style of a thirty-five-cent nineteen-fifties Mickey Spillane paperback. The arcane glamour that radiates from those yellowing volumes seems to me beyond reproduction. But, of course, it is churlish to say such a thing.

The great mystery of James's life is why he chose to devote so much energy to the kind of project that ends in a stapled pamphlet. In Trinidad, where he grew up, he received a good British education, and in Britain, where he moved in 1932, he took on an admirably broad span of literary projects; and everywhere he had success. He devoted "The Black Jacobins"—his masterpiece, surely—to the Haitian revolution of Toussaint L'Ouverture, and he managed in that book to write what is called history from below, yet also history from above, and to show that each depends on the other, which was a nice trick. His work on that book led to a stage play, and, though Kent Worcester's biography makes the play sound pretty bad, the badness must have been halfway interesting, if only because Paul Robeson performed the lead. James wrote cricket journalism, too. He was an anti-snob: he couldn't stand people who failed to see the beauty in popular sports or failed to identify the crowd in the bleachers with the democratic Demos of ancient Greece. The virtue of the popular was a main theme of the book he eventually wrote about cricket, "Beyond a Boundary." And that, too, was a success.

In 1938, he moved to the United States. It was a land of opportunity. James was a special sort of Marxist and, within the world of American Marxism, which was capacious in those days, he chose to inhabit the tiny corner that was reserved for the followers of Leon Trotsky; and, because Trotskyism in the nineteen-thirties and forties attracted a certain brainy kind of intellectual, James found himself received with open arms by a fairly select group of American writers. Dwight Macdonald and James T. Farrell occasionally served as his mail-drop. Meyer Schapiro was his friend.

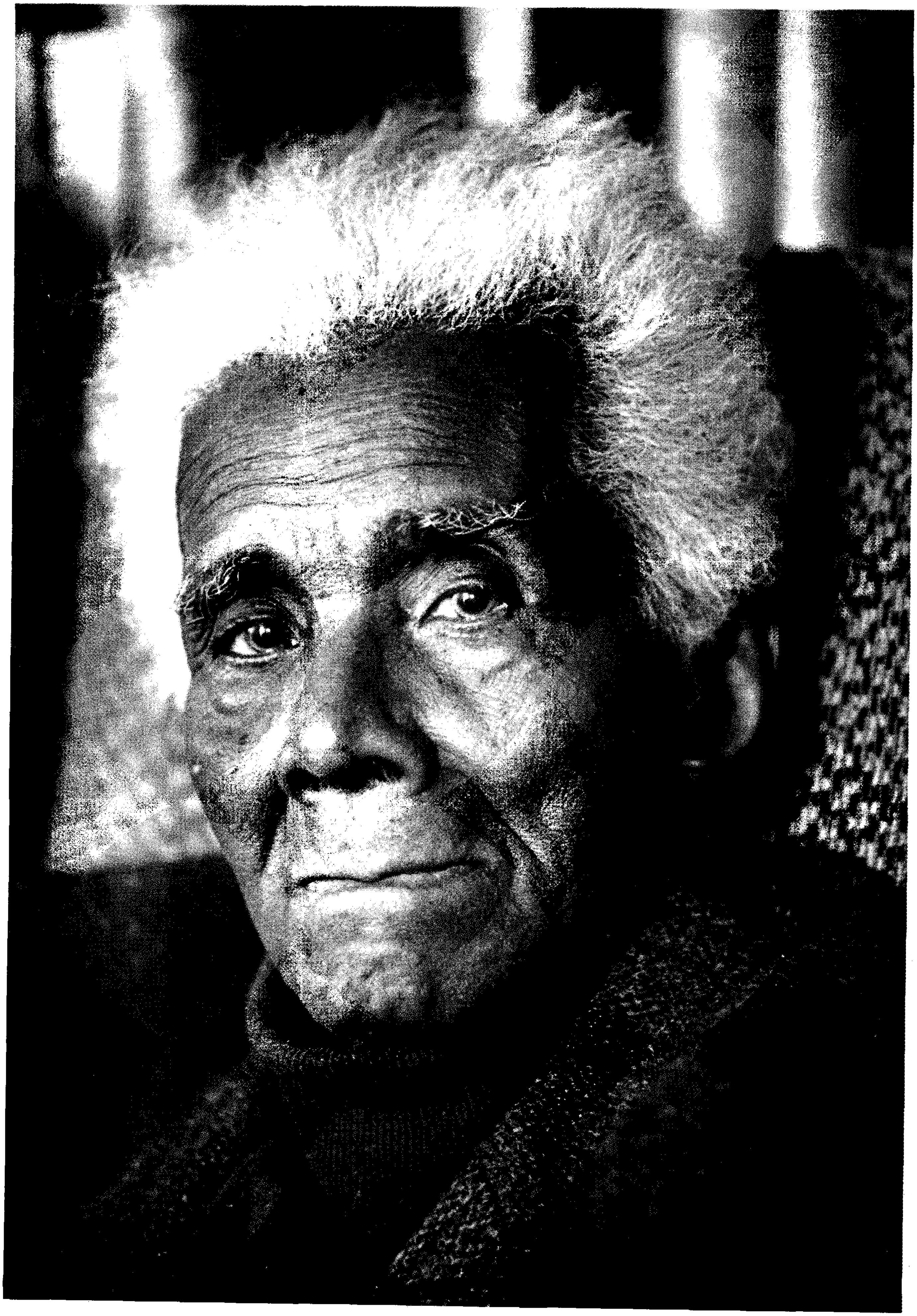
James was black, and the black writers of New York were especially happy to make his acquaintance, and he theirs. The most interesting letter in "Special Delivery" describes how excited he was to strike up a friendship with Richard Wright, in 1944, at about the time that Wright announced his break with the Communist Party. The two men spent an evening talking about the "N'o Question," meaning "Negro," and the thrill of that conversation led James, when he got home, to stay up half the night composing, in letter form, a history of the human race according to the philosophy of Hegel, as if nothing humbler could express his enthusiasm. He consulted with Wright and Ralph Ellison and a few other black intellectuals about founding a magazine to be called *American Pages*, which would have been quite a project if the thing had got off the ground. Yet James differed in one respect from the New York writers he knew. Macdonald, Farrell, Schapiro, Wright, Ellison, and all kinds of other talented people plunged into Marxism during the nineteen-thirties and took their political commitments seriously, and then plunged out, and got on with their work. But not James.

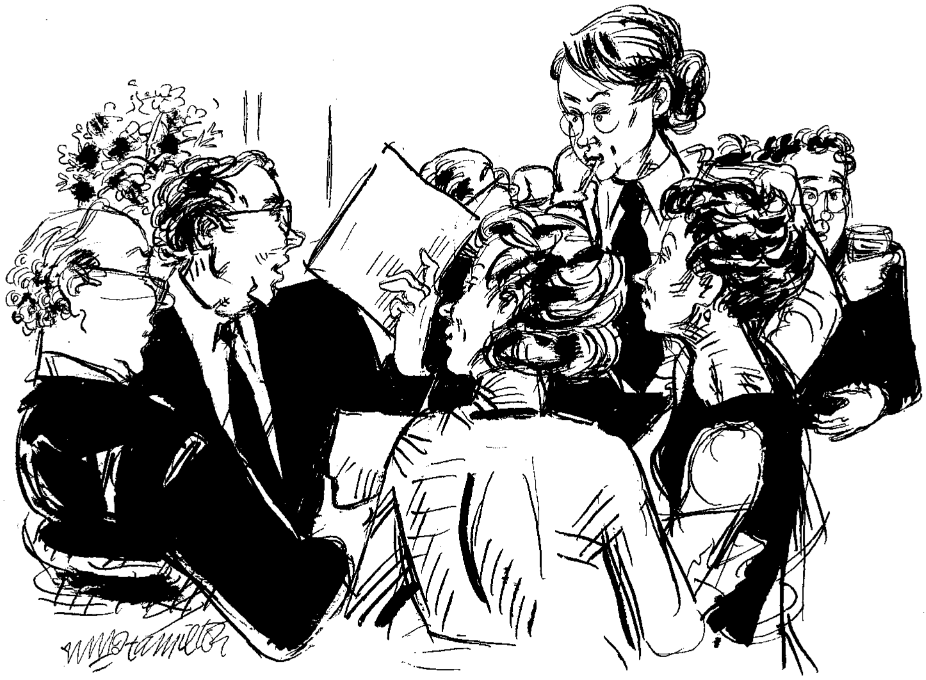
He remained in the United States until 1953, and during the whole of those fifteen years and for part of his time afterward—in Britain, in Trinidad, and again in the United States (he returned here in 1968 and taught college for several years)—he lived the life of a sectarian militant. Under the pseudonym J. R. Johnson, he was a mainstay of a mini-organization of perhaps sixty or eighty people called the Johnson-Forest Tendency (and other rubrics), which was the splinter of a Trotskyist splinter. And upon those few dozen faithful followers James showered his sea of pamphlets, polemics, newspaper columns, and letters.

Why then did he pursue such a peculiar and unrewarding life? It was because he honestly expected that at any moment modern society's "obeisance before Mam-

C. L. R. James (opposite) in London, 1984. His life was a repeated story of high hopes and of people not equal to them.

PHOTO BY JOE MANN, COURTESY OF C.L.R. JAMES INSTITUTE





"On my order, could you hold the personal-approval rating?"

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mon"—he liked that sort of flourish—was going to end and the world revolution was going to break out. The industrial workers were going to seize power and build a new social system—a loose, informal, grass-roots democracy, a government of workers' councils, based in the factories. Or maybe (as he felt in later years) the world revolution was not going to take place this week or next but would be, instead, a matter of centuries—a step-by-step rise to dignity and freedom, already well begun, on the part of people who in the past had always been horribly oppressed. In either case, something big. As he wrote in his letter about getting to know Wright, "we are now on the eve, historically speaking, of a complete realization of the purpose, meaning, and potentialities of human existence."

Those pamphlets and essays of his emanate, as a result, a pop-eyed air of millenarian expectation. Yet—here is the little complication in the writings of C. L. R. James—from this cranky millenarianism comes nearly all his originality and verve. He felt that, as the leader of a revolutionary faction, he ought to keep a lookout for new developments in every field of culture and politics; and in every field and in the most faraway places he kept detecting, with a heightened alertness, signs of enormous historical changes about to occur. He saw it with a backward glance at the eighteenth-century sugar plantations of Haiti, and saw it again with a fond look at the cricket fields of England its colonies, and he saw it still again in the workaday life of the United States during his own time.

James basically loved the United States—at least, he did during those fifteen years after 1938, notwithstanding a lot of unpleasant experiences with Jim Crow and idiotic white people. He thought that America in the past, during the age of Melville, had produced the world's finest literature of democracy. The literature of his own time appealed to him less, except for what was written by his friend Dick Wright, whom he adored (for a while). But the popular arts held him enthralled. He couldn't get enough of B movies, comics, detective novels, and true confessions. He scanned those things for hints of the impending social upheaval, and—as his letters and his unfinished book "American Civilization" (Blackwell; 1993) show—his heart pounded with excitement at what he thought was portended.

He took the "Dick Tracy" comic strip in the *Daily News* to be a mark of surly class resentments stemming from the Great Depression—"the bitterness, the violence, the brutality, the sadism simmering in the population, the desire to revenge themselves with their own hands, to get some release for what society had done to them since 1929." He saw in Bette Davis's superiority (as he judged it) over Ingrid Bergman and Greer Garson the superior vitality of America over Europe. Ginger Rogers, "one of the people," was for him a sign of the American masses' gaining confidence in themselves—"and I don't mind the silly pictures she plays in."

The James boom today is mostly a university affair, and his Hollywood and comic-strip enthusiasms account for a good part of it. A number of the professors who have contributed to "Rethinking C. L. R. James" are fans of popular culture, and they are grateful for any authoritative support they can find that will justify their taste—even if James, ever discriminating in his anti-snobbism, was careful to balance his Grade B passions with the observation that B is still not A. James's principal error, as certain of the professors see it, was to go from applauding the mass-produced arts to applauding the country that did the mass-producing. In one of his letters he gushes, "The America of today is the most wonderful country in the world." The professors can't stand that sort of thing. Andrew Ross, an editor of the journal *Social Text*, tut-tuts over James's "American Civilization" and its "deafening silence on the topic of genocide, territorial theft, and cultural degradation of the native populations." Professor Ross would like to hear a little more about United States imperialism and its crimes.

James did go on about imperialist crimes, especially the crimes of the French and the British in Africa and the West Indies. His pamphleteering and committee work in the thirties made him a founding father of the modern independence movements in those two regions. Now and then, he inveighed against the Americans, too. But it is true that in regard to imperialist crimes what enraged him most, particularly during those fifteen years in the United States, was Soviet Communism. He had an unusually clear understanding of the oppressive nature of Soviet society ("the greatest example of barbarism that history has ever known"). And because of that understanding he nursed a well-informed hatred of the Communist Parties in the United States and everywhere else: this in a time when a majority on the American left (alas) and not a few liberals still looked with friendly eyes on Communist movements around the world. In James's own estimation, the masterpiece among his writings was a 1950 stapled pamphlet entitled "State Capitalism and World Revolution," written in Marxese as an internal Trotskyist discussion paper for the purpose of demonstrating that from the point of view of the working class Communism was a hell that pretended to be paradise. And if you add up these several instincts and attitudes of his you see something fairly novel.

For here was a left-wing champion of decolonization and black independence movements whose impulse was to loathe the Soviet bloc and its allies and to gaze with eager enthusiasm on the popular arts of the United States, though not on America's government or business class—quite as if America, not the Communist world, were the natural home of the super-democratic, proletarian revolution that he kept expecting. You cannot say that James entirely worked out the logic of this point of view. His opinions wobbled sometimes. In his later years, suddenly gullible, he clung to a belief in the democratic quality of certain anti-colonial revolutions in Africa and elsewhere long after his own doctrines should have told him something else—as is discreetly acknowledged by the shrewdest of the contributors to "Rethinking," Robin D. G. Kelley. But perhaps these wobbles should be looked on indulgently. The hectoring, oracular tone in James can get a bit much, but the wobbling shows that beneath the granite edifice of his theories he was honestly trying to think things afresh, for better and for worse.

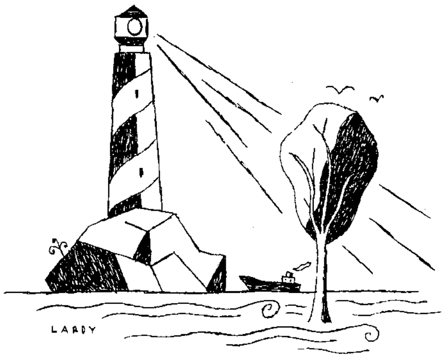
JAMES'S private life had its share of pathos. In California in 1938, on his roundabout way from New York to confer with Trotsky in Mexico, he met an eighteen-year-old named Constance Webb, and, though she was a Southern white girl and was about half his age, he launched an extended epistolary campaign of courtship, whose progress is recorded in extravagant detail in "Special Delivery."

Webb tells James she would like to become an actress. James responds by taking up a study of theatre history and sending her commentaries on Robeson's acting technique and the Stanislavski school, along with an assurance that, if she will only accept his coaching, she will soar upward into the heavens of theatrical greatness. She turns to poetry. James takes up a study of the history of verse extending back to ancient Greece and assures her that if only she will follow his teachings her own place in the history of literature will be revolutionary. Curiosity leads her to literary criticism. James sends for the works of the French critic Sainte-Beuve, and assures her that, with a little instruction, her critical essays will make people like his fellow-Trotskyists Farrell and Irving Howe rub their eyes in astonishment. She begins writing an essay. He tells her, "Sign it alone. We'll make it perfect. It will be *your* work. I'll see to that."

Yet, after two hundred and sixty pages and five or six years of straight-out seduction ("For me you are the most enchanting creature I have ever known," etc.) and displays of erudition on more topics than you can imagine, the poor man has still not got her into bed. "You don't love me 'that way,'" one of his letters acknowledges. "Good, for the time being I accept—for the sake of argument," he writes, knowing full well that he, a student of Hegel's "Science of Logic," can hardly be defeated in argument (or so he thinks). She has boyfriends, for a while even gets married, and, when the marriage collapses, takes up with newer boyfriends. She goes out with an actor associated with the Communist Party. Nothing could horrify James more. Yet he remains preternaturally calm. She sleeps with them, not with him, but she also writes poems, and, as he tells her—pathetically, by now—surely the poetry is for him, and what is sex in comparison with that?

James seems to have been one of those men, like Balzac, for whom letter writing is the highest form of passion. In one wildly exalted moment in 1946, he pictures himself releasing streams of glorious expression for both Constance Webb and the world proletariat:

> I would like to write for you such letters as were never written before. To sit down and write to you, as I cannot even write for the proletariat but as I will write for them one day when they are ready. They will unloose power from me, the power I feel surging in me. . . . And if the proletariat does act and a voice is needed to give its actions their fullest implications, I not only know that I will do it, but that then I'll write to you as never before. No one will ever write as I shall write then. No one. The revolution is a release of power—and release for me too, in every direction. You see what you mean to me?



Eventually, she does see. They marry (requiring his sojourn in Nevada, to legalize the end of a long-ago first marriage, back in Trinidad). There is a child. Yet, even during his moment of romantic success—brief, brief, and then a new divorce, as anyone could have predicted—you can see his next calamity fast approaching. James had arrived in the United States on a six-month visa that was extended for another six months, but after that he was strictly illegal. Worse—he belonged to political organizations that figured as officially subversive on the Attorney General's list. By 1948, in the months before his volume of letters ends (after which we must turn to some occasional autobiographical writings to follow the story, or to Worcester's scrupulous "C. L. R. James," or to an earlier, more lyrical biography, by Paul Buhle), the F.B.I. had tracked him down. And in 1952 he found himself imprisoned on Ellis Island, awaiting deportation under the tyrannical provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act.

Where could such a man turn for help? The Johnson-Forest Tendency contained not a single person with clout or influence to wield on his behalf, and the icy sectarian spirit of the group seems to have discouraged people outside the organization from launching a public defense campaign. James was a perfect isolato, marooned in New York Harbor. And in that miserable setting he picked up his pen and composed one more remarkable book of political and cultural criticism—"Mariners, Renegades and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In." This book is truly a wonder. You might suppose that James, in his prison, would be seething with indignation at the United States. But he has the greatness of soul to look past his own sufferings and his immediate surroundings, and the indignation that surges in his heart is directed at Stalin's Communism and its supporters and fellow-travellers in America and everywhere else.

In an autobiographical chapter he describes getting thrown into a cell with Ellis Island's political prisoners, who turn out to be Communists. That worries him plenty. The Communist movement all over the world had engaged in a murder campaign against Trotskyists. Instead of attacking him, though, his cellmates offer a little solidarity. James has reason to be grateful. An ulcer prevents him from being able to eat the prison food, but the authorities won't give him any other, and he becomes gravely ill (and ultimately has to spend two months in the hospital, under twenty-four-hour guard). The Communists smuggle food to him. They are brave and rebellious—principled, you might almost say. Yet he worries about that, too. As he sees it, the Communists undertake bold and commendable deeds mostly to bring their own party to power, and afterward those same Communists who rebel against bad prison conditions will happily enforce much worse conditions if only they can be the jailers.

His study of Melville is a meditation on people like those Communists. For who is Captain Ahab? In James's portrait, Ahab is a member of the managerial class who, like the Communist leaders in the age of Stalin (or like the Nazis), has turned against civilization in pursuit of an insane goal. Who are Ahab's officers on the Pequod? They are intellectuals who ought to know better but, like Communism's fellow-travellers, have bent before the Captain's will. And the Pequod crew? They are the workers of the world, who have been recruited into a mad mission and are being led to their doom. It is a perfectly plausible interpretation, and it is filled with the keen emotion of James's identification with the Peqoud's crewmen—the unlucky mariners, islanders like himself, caught in a situation, like his own in the Ellis Island prison, that is beyond their control.

James's book about Melville is, in short, a study of twentieth-century totalitarianism. It is something of a companion volume to the writings on totalitarianism by Hannah Arendt and Czeslaw Milosz from those same early Cold War years, except that James's book has the special merit of conveying a strange mood of creepy menace—the feeling of a grand cataclysm about to burst that pops up almost everywhere in his writings. And his book is, in addition, one more attempt at seduction, addressed this time to the United States. He wants to demonstrate how useful it would be to confer citizenship on a man like him, full of fight and bristly with a knowledge of Communism and of America's classic literature and of the proper way to harness the latter against the former.

Only—a pity! James's life was a repeated story of high hopes and of people not equal to them. Just as the world proletariat never did turn to him for revolutionary leadership, and just as Miss Webb never did fully warm to those hundreds of pages of oracular letters and heavy-handed flattery, the United States could not find the imagination to respond adequately to this brilliant and idiosyncratic man. James had "Mariners, Renegades and Castaways" printed up in a private edition in 1953. (And that edition remains, even in these boom years of the James revival, the single proper one to date; when another edition was brought out, in the late nineteen-seventies, the harsher anti-Communist sections were pruned away, doubtless to spare James's conventional left-wing admirers the shock of seeing their hero endorse the Cold War.) He mailed a copy to every member of Congress, in the desperate hope that some enlightened patriot might leaf through the curious pages and recognize the error that America was about to make.

But what could he have been thinking of? Does Congress consist of people who read commentaries on Herman Melville? And so James was deported, and, though he returned many years later, once the McCarthy era was over, to do some college teaching, he was old and frail by then, and his creative days were behind him. The loss was his, but it was America's, too. There have not been many writers on politics, literature, and history as imaginative and original as C. L. R. James. Who is to say what direction his thinking might have taken, or what influence he might have acquired, had he been able to enjoy the rights of citizenship during the rest of the Cold War and during the high tide of the civil-rights revolution? In the introduction to "C. L. R. James on the 'Negro Question,' " the story is told that Malcolm X, at a moment shortly before his murder, when he was looking for new ideas, came into possession of some pamphlets by James and expressed curiosity about the man—a historical anecdote almost too tantalizing to bear. ♦

AT THE GALLERIES

OLITSKI'S SURPRISE

SOME of the best and most surprising paintings on exhibition this summer have been at the Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery, in Keene, New Hampshire. They are by Jules Olitski, one of the original color-field painters, who rose to prominence in the sixties, and what's surprising about them is that they are landscapes—unabashed, recognizable, and so gorgeous that they risk critical scoldings. Olitski, after all, has been for many years abstraction's purist avatar, the artist anointed by the formalist critic Clement Greenberg as "the best living painter." And now he's doing these small (some are only eight by ten), Turneresque images of sunrises and sunsets over the water at Lake Winnipesaukee, New Hampshire, and Islamorada, in the Florida Keys, the two places he lives. How did it happen?

A "yearning" to do landscapes came over him about four years ago, Olitski says, but "I'd go out and my heart would sink, because I wasn't getting it." Then, one day, about a year and a half ago, he noticed a postcard reproduction of Delacroix's "The Sea at Dieppe," which his wife, Kristina, had bought at the Louvre—it was tacked to a wall in her office. "Suddenly it just burst in me, a kind of clarity," Olitski says. "This postcard brought me to my knees. I didn't know it was a Delacroix until I looked on the back. And it somehow gave me the courage—this kind of intense clarity—and I thought, yes, I can do this."

Olitski isn't giving up abstraction. Far from it. He makes no distinction between representational and abstract art, and some of the landscapes are more abstract than not. Although he would like to show the landscapes in New York, there are no plans to do so. Too controversial, maybe? In the current sea of mediocre abstract art, anybody who rocks the boat is in danger of getting thrown overboard.

—DODIE KAZANJIAN

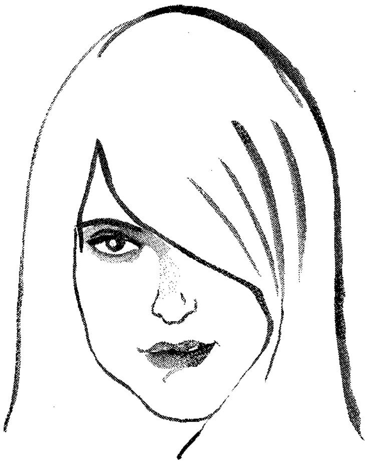
"Pink Dawn" (1996), by Jules Olitski.

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

BIG

A decade of unlikely happiness.

BY DAPHNE MERKIN



Elizabeth McCracken

"THE GIANT'S HOUSE" (Dial; $19.95), a first novel by Elizabeth McCracken, bills itself, quite baldly, as "a romance." Not just a novel but the real heartfelt thing, a romance—if such a genre can still be said to survive in a form other than the self-consciously parodic. Nothing explicitly amorous takes place in its pages: nary a sex scene, hardly a full-fledged kiss. Nor do the two lovers qualify as a couple in any conventional sense, since one of them is a giant doomed to die young (three months after his twentieth birthday, to be exact) and the other is a woman who is quite a bit older, stuck in a job that is almost laughably anti-romantic.

As if that weren't obstacle enough, there are no bright-lights-big-city diversions to take the reader's mind off the novel's resolutely unglamorous small-town atmosphere—no drugs or fashion models or power-hungry moguls to suggest that we are in the shimmering presence of a larger-than-life liaison. (Indeed, this pair's idea of making whoopee is to drink a bottle of champagne and thereupon retire to separate hotel rooms.) And yet such is the incantatory power of McCracken's eccentric tale that by its close we are completely in the grip of its strangely conceived ardor.

It is the mid-fifties in Brewsterville, a not particularly picturesque spot "halfway up the spit curl" of Cape Cod. Peggy Cort is the town librarian, thirty years old and never married; her special fondness is for people in the abstract rather than the concrete. "It is only the execution of the idea," she notes, "that disappoints." A diligent sort, she relishes the orderly flow of providing information and stamping books, collecting fines and refilling scrap-paper holders. Peggy rises and goes to bed early, dresses in a self-acknowledged "dowdy brown wardrobe," and considers her body a "dull place." Her take on the world, like that of many compelling narrators, is brisk to the point of astringency: "For some people, history is simply what your wife looks good standing in front of." Peggy has retained the piercing clarity of vision that people generally outgrow with childhood, and the result is a discomfort with things that most of us have stumbled into step with: "The rest of the world fell in love, and the physics baffled me. I could see it happen—God knows, all around, I saw falling couples—but I did not understand the emotional gravity that allowed their descent." Little escapes her absorbent gaze, and what she sees does not incline her to clemency, especially when it involves her fellow human beings. "Other people's happiness is always a fascinating bore," she remarks. "It sucks the oxygen out of the room; you're left gasping, greedy, amazed by a deficit in yourself you hadn't ever noticed."

Having decided long ago that "most people are idiots," Peggy has learned to cultivate her own company. ("If I'd had the choice, if people were offering, I would have charged admission to myself.") But then James Carlson Sweatt, also known as The Giant, enters her consciousness and takes up urgent residence there. She first lays eyes on him when he is eleven years old, "tall even for a grown man," and asks her help in finding a book on magicians. The boy sparks a protective spirit in the librarian (then twenty-five), which enables her to see him outside of her rigid classification of people into "patrons" and "co-workers." As generous with him as she is severe with others, she describes his bizarre appearance in an uncharacteristic tone of gentle euphemism: "His bones had great plans, and the rest of him, voice and skin balance, strained to keep pace."

Peggy's decade-long involvement with James and the family flux that surrounds him bring her into contact with a larger, more dramatic world than the "small, hesitant thing" that is her own life. "All I wanted," she explains—after considering the nature of her interest in James and the possibility that it will be adjudged "desperate and sick"—"was to become a part of him, to affect him physically." Even so, she remains first and last an observer, eternally outside the frame of the picture, remarking upon an ashtray filled with the "tiny scorched bouquets" of cigarette ends; the "girlish and powdery" quality of a woman's voice; an empty glass that is "still glazed red" with tomato juice. Indeed, one of the strengths of "The Giant's House" is that the reader accepts its choice of details—the way that James's alcoholic and short-lived mother is always referred to, rather formally, as "Mrs. Sweatt"; even the creaking last-minute maneuverings of the plot—just as one accepts the piling up of incongruous details in one's dreams.

Although McCracken is as original a writer as they come, her novel can be placed in a vaguely Southern tradition, which combines Christian sentiment with an air of rueful secularism. I was reminded at various points of Harper Lee, Marjorie Kellogg, Carson McCullers, and Walker Percy. What these authors share is a confiding and idiosyncratic tone that comes to seem as natural as the way one talks to oneself. What they also share is an embrace of the anomalous, not as a calculated effect but as a means of recasting our notions of what human redemption might look like. Because "The Giant's House" begins with a premise of freakishness (Peggy's as well as James's), it manages to surmount our postmodern wariness and, against all odds, make romance seem real—as real and inevitable as librarians, or death.

Who would have thought it—that you could take one overaged virgin and one oversized boy and end up with a story that captures the feel of passion, its consuming hold? Somewhere in the middle of reading this book, I found myself wanting never to leave its carefully delineated, well-tended precincts. I fell in love with James Sweatt, all eight feet seven inches and four hundred and fifteen pounds of him, his glasses as "big as horses' blinders," his card and magic tricks, his great, doomed elongation. You will, too. ◆

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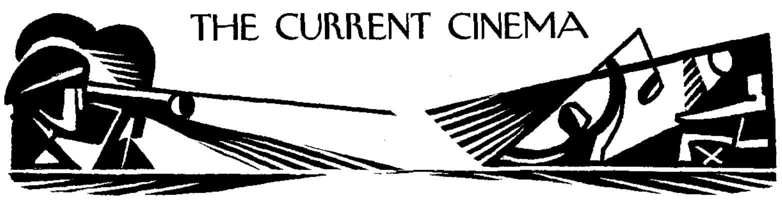


LONG, HOT SUMMER

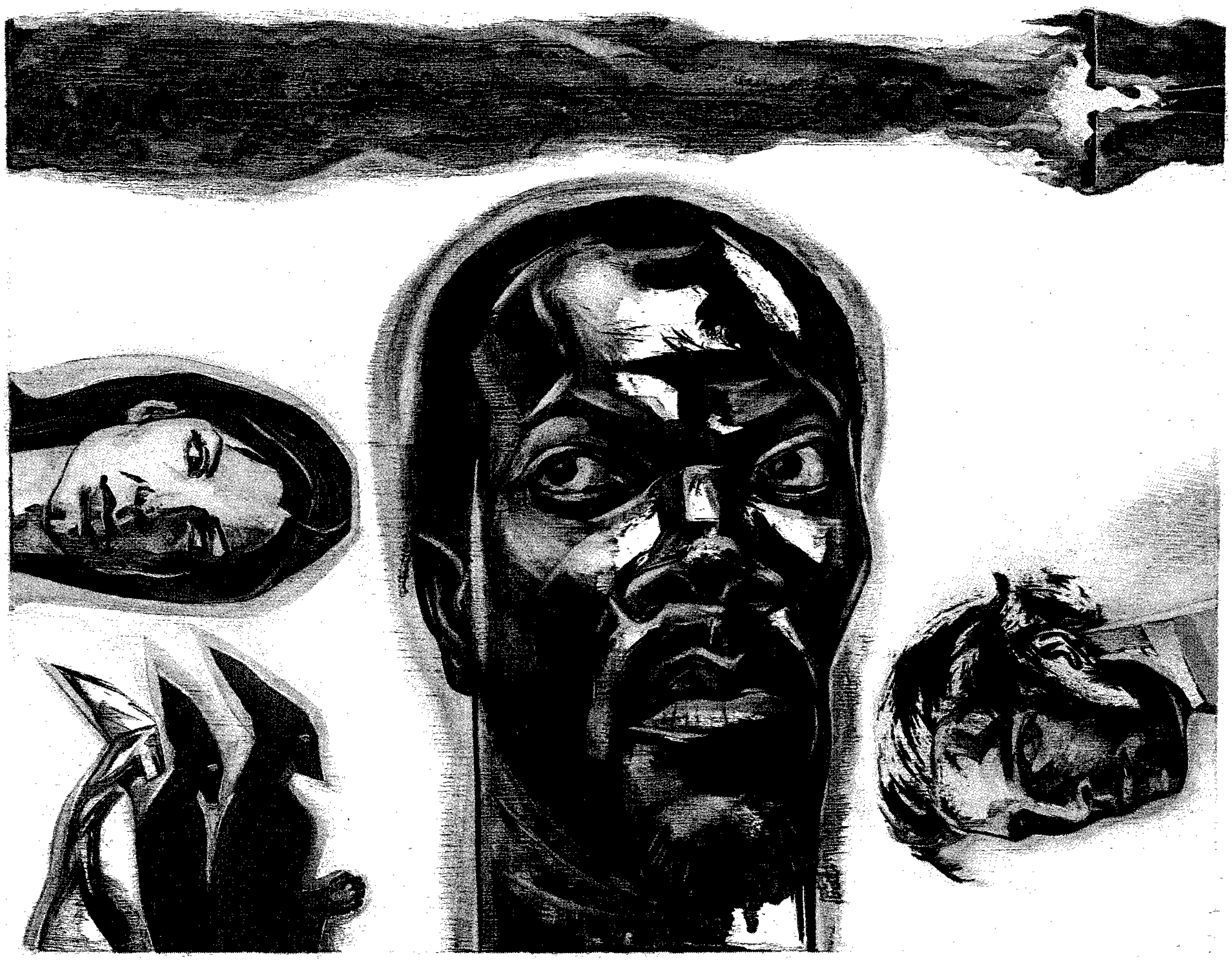
A sweaty courtroom melodrama, and a Michael Keaton comedy.

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

JOEL SCHUMACHER'S Deep South courtroom melodrama "A Time to Kill" is being touted as an "adult" alternative to the mindless action pictures that have—as usual—dominated the studios' summer release schedules, but the movie isn't fundamentally very different from the dumb, shameless, feel-good blockbusters. Like the elaborately conceived battles and explosions in "Independence Day," the emotional crises and debating-team rhetorical flourishes of "A Time to Kill" seem calculated to resurrect both the genre conventions and the sensibilities of fifties movies. Schumacher's film, which is based on a 1989 novel by John Grisham, has the solemn tone of a Stanley Kramer social-problem drama and the self-consciously steamy look of the Faulkner and Tennessee Williams adaptations that were for a few years Hollywood's favorite means of appearing literary while also showcasing the physical attributes of its leanest hunks and its most voluptuous sirens: there's nothing like a long, hot Southern summer (summer is apparently the region's only season) to fray tempers, provoke violent confrontations, and make T-shirts and slips cling provocatively to firm, eager young bodies.

The Southern sweatfests of the Eisenhower era were mostly written and directed by Northern liberals keen to capture the raw passions of the less evolved, and also to instruct these backwoods folks on racial tolerance and healthy sexual behavior. Schumacher and his screenwriter, Akiva Goldsman—both native New Yorkers—have pretty much the same agenda in "A Time to Kill," and it feels hopelessly anachronistic. Since movie eroticism has become more explicit, damp undergarments aren't quite the thrill they used to be; and, given the state of race relations in the urban North, the filmmakers' authority to preach to the South is a lot weaker than it was forty years ago. The movie sets up its hero—a young and fairly liberal white lawyer named Jake Brigance (Matthew McConaughey)—as a kind of New South straw man, confident of his enlightenment until the filmmakers force him to admit that he still has a mighty long way to go. What Jake and all the other perspiration-soaked characters in "A Time to Kill" really need is central air-conditioning, but what they get from Schumacher and Goldsman is an overpowering blast of homiletic hot air.

Grisham's novel—which was written before "The Firm" established him as a best-selling manufacturer of breathless, inelegant legal thrillers—isn't exactly a work of literary art, but it's good meat-and-potatoes storytelling, and Grisham seems less interested in raising the reader's pulse rate than in examining the social complexities and ethical ambiguities of small-town life in Mississippi. In the book, Jake Brigance has a portrait of Faulkner in his office—a detail (missing from the movie) that may signal Grisham's acknowledgment of a rather large debt to "Intruder in the Dust." Jake, like Faulkner's Gavin Stevens, is a decent, intelligent white Southerner defending a black man who is charged with murder: in both stories, the victims are white, and the lawyer, therefore, himself becomes an object of suspicion in the white community—to prejudiced eyes, a traitor to his race. In the film, the beleaguered hero's client, Carl Lee Hailey (Samuel L. Jackson), has gunned down a couple of rednecks who raped his ten-year-old daughter. Jake, along with the black people of the town and a handful of other whites, believes that Hailey's action is justified, but he realizes that he'd have a tough time making that case to a jury of twelve Caucasians; in order to save his client from the gas chamber, he begins to prepare an insanity defense. The lawyer, whose one-man practice is already struggling, gathers a team of oddball volunteers to help him out: his drunken, disbarred legal mentor, Lucien Wilbanks (Donald Sutherland); an amiably sleazy divorce lawyer, Harry Rex Vonner (Oliver Platt); and a glib Boston-bred law student, Ellen Roark (Sandra Bullock), who brashly proclaims herself a genius. Their legal duties aren't very sharply defined, but their dramatic functions are painfully clear: Lucien pontificates; Harry Rex wisecracks; Ellen flirts and does a little Nancy Drew detective work. Jake thus remains free to spend most of his time striking poses—arranging his exquisite features in preparation for his showstopper courtroom-oratory number at the end, when all that can save Carl Lee Hailey is the choked-sob sincerity of a sexy white lawyer.



Bullock, Jackson, and McConaughey in "A Time to Kill": An overpowering blast of homiletic hot air.

JOE MORSE

Schumacher and Goldsman previously collaborated on the 1994 Grisham adaptation "The Client," which was a lively, pungent chase movie. It told a simple story of a reluctant witness—an eleven-year-old boy—on the run from the Mob and an ambitious U.S. Attorney, and the filmmakers kept it racing along on the strength of crude but effective suspense techniques and ebullient star turns by Tommy Lee Jones and Susan Sarandon. "A Time to Kill" has larger themes and a much more complicated narrative, involving the Ku Klux Klan, the National Guard, the N.A.A.C.P., the news media, and the hero's anxious, nagging wife (played by Ashley Judd); and this time Schumacher and Goldsman are clearly overmatched. The strongest performers here—Platt, Kevin Spacey (as an oily D.A.), and Charles S. Dutton (as the sheriff)—mostly don't have enough to do. Samuel L. Jackson makes a powerful impression in his early scenes, but he's finally undone by having to utter too many of the script's heaviest and most unconvincing lines. For much of the picture, Hailey is portrayed the way he is in the book—as a proud rural workingman, angry but frightened. In the end, though, Schumacher and Goldsman force him to step out of character and berate his lawyer with a black-rage speech that has a distinctly Northern-urban ring to it, and Jackson, great actor though he is, can't pull it off. Sandra Bullock, who has top billing, is actually a supporting player here, and not a terribly vivid one, at that. Her presence is too lightweight, and her readings too awkward, to persuade us of her character's supposedly formidable intellect, and her girlish sexiness is made to look silly: the movie sets her up as a seductress, and then turns her into a lovelorn martyr.

Matthew McConaughey, in his first leading role (after small parts in "Dazed and Confused," "Boys on the Side," and "Lone Star"), has been asked to carry this huge, unwieldy movie on his untested charisma, and it's perhaps not entirely his fault that in the process he's squashed like a luckless water bug. Schumacher gives the young actor the full star-is-born treatment, complete with adoring closeups that use strategically placed shadows and careful applications of glistening sweat to highlight the dramatic planes of his face. (In one ludicrous scene, the movie alternates romantic shots of McConaughey, lit like Dietrich in "Shanghai Express," with punishing closeups of Ashley Judd, lit like

Divine in "Pink Flamingos.") But it's hard not to feel, even as early as half an hour into the picture, that McConaughey has been untimely ripped from his obscurity, delivered before his talents have come to term. He's not incompetent, but his acting is tentative and remote, and those closeups, which isolate him from his surroundings and the other actors, serve to emphasize his shortcomings. Although Jake is conceived as a likable, unpretentious regular guy, McConaughey wanders through the picture in a narcissistic haze, a Calvin Klein perfume-ad model who has lost his way.

Grisham, who is credited as a producer of "A Time to Kill," has unaccountably allowed Schumacher and Goldsman to distort nearly all of his story's modest insights into the dynamics of Southern culture. The movie glosses over the small, human flaws that the novel affectionately conferred on Jake Brigance—ambition, a touch of greed, a showman's taste for publicity, and an untimely weakness for Margaritas—and adds a far more disturbing failing. Near the end of the two-and-a-half-hour picture, Jake is suddenly condemned by his client as an unconscious racist, a redneck deluding himself that he's a liberal. Just like that, the filmmakers attribute to their otherwise saintly hero the original sin of the South, and for no better reason, it seems, than to give themselves an opportunity to redeem him. Once Jake has seen the light—it takes about a minute and a half—and has received encouragement from Ellen, the idealistic New Englander, he's ready to belt out the big summation, in which, bizarrely, he attempts to sway the white jurors by confronting them with their own prejudices. Although the movie never questions the novel's most dubious argument—Grisham's defense of vigilante justice—it nonetheless presumes to set the audience on the true path of racial understanding. Like the earnest message movies of the fifties, "A Time to Kill" seems to think that moral wisdom is something to be dispensed from a carpetbag.

THE Michael Keaton comedy "Multiplicity," directed by Harold Ramis, is also being sold as a movie for adults. The picture is more enjoyable than "A Time to Kill," but actual grownups are still likely to come out of it wondering exactly who Hollywood thinks they are. The idea, apparently, is that white, middle-class, fortyish, married-with-children moviegoers will look at the protagonist, Doug Kinney—who is white, middle-class, fortyish, and the father of two cute kids—and gratefully recognize that "Multiplicity" is a picture about people like them. (That's what niche marketing is: reinforcing the target audience's image of itself.) The premise is that Doug (Keaton), a construction foreman who's being run ragged by the conflicting demands of his job and his family, decides to clone himself in order to relieve the pressure. While the clone, Doug Two, goes to work, the original Doug stays home, thus allowing his harried wife (played by Andie MacDowell) to return to her job as a real-estate agent. Before long, though, Doug gets fed up with the Mr. Mom role and clones himself again: Doug Three, a neat-freak, handles the domestic chores, while Doug One spends his days golfing, bungee-jumping, and sailing. A bit later, Two and Three, unwisely, create a clone of their own. Doug Four, copied from the macho, slobby Doug Two, proves to be a babbling cretin. Keaton, a wonderfully versatile comedian, is terrific in all his incarnations—particularly as the fastidious Three, the character who least resembles any of the actor's previous roles. A movie in which Michael Keaton constitutes a significant percentage of the cast would seem to have a lot going for it.

Unfortunately, "Multiplicity" has as many screenwriters as it has Dougs—the credits list Chris Miller, Mary Hale, Lowell Ganz, and Babaloo Mandel—and the script, like the hero's scheme, collapses in chaos. The combined efforts of Writers One, Two, Three, and Four somehow fail to generate the kind of volatile complications that the plot promises, and that the star deserves. There's not nearly enough antagonism among the four Dougs: the only comic tension is supplied by the hero's anxiety that one or more of his doppelgängers will sleep with his wife (who's unaware of their existence). Once that not very compelling issue is resolved, in a protracted and mildly amusing farce climax, "Multiplicity" wraps the story up with a few sitcom truisms about being yourself, accepting responsibility for your life, and so on: Doug remodels the house, dismisses the clones, and realizes, at last, that the burdens of bourgeois normality aren't really too much for him to bear. It's a funny thing about these movies for grownups—when they're over, you feel less like an adult than like a kid bolting from a stuffy classroom. ♦

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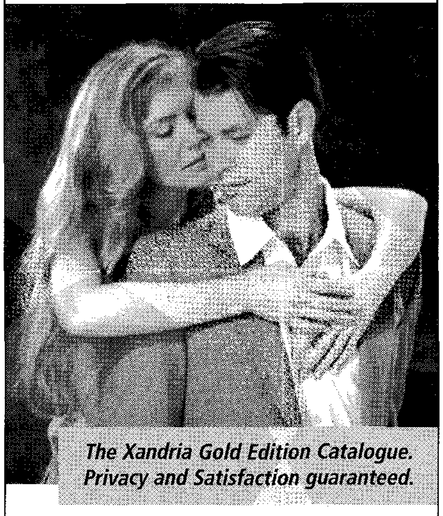

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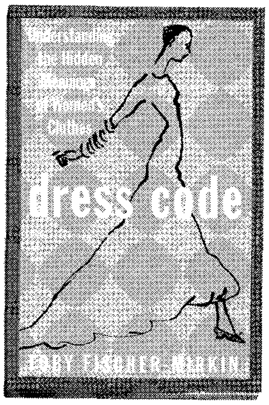

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THE THEATRE

VILLAGE VOICE

"Martin Guerre" gives power to the peasants, with mixed results.

BY JOHN LAHR

In 1560, the beautiful Bertrande de Rols took the stand at a high-court hearing in Toulouse to explain that her husband—the man who called himself Martin Guerre, and with whom she had been reunited for three years following his disappearance for nearly a decade—was an impostor. The court was ready to find in favor of the husband when the bona-fide Martin Guerre, who gives the term Mr. Right a meaning all its own, rolled up after a twelve-year absence. The sensational reversal of fortune and the ambiguities of personality and intention in this tale have echoed down the ages. The impostor, Arnaud du Thil, was hanged and then burned, but Bertrande and Martin have had their feet put to the fire by literature: they've been the subject of essays by Montaigne and Leibniz, of several novels, and of two films, "The Return of Martin Guerre" (1982) and "Sommersby" (1993). Now Sir Cameron MacIntosh's £3.5-million extravaganza "Martin Guerre," at the Prince Edward Theatre in London, looks at the story through the filter of the sung-through musical and of Business Art. As historical destinies go, this is rather like Bismarck's being remembered as a herring.

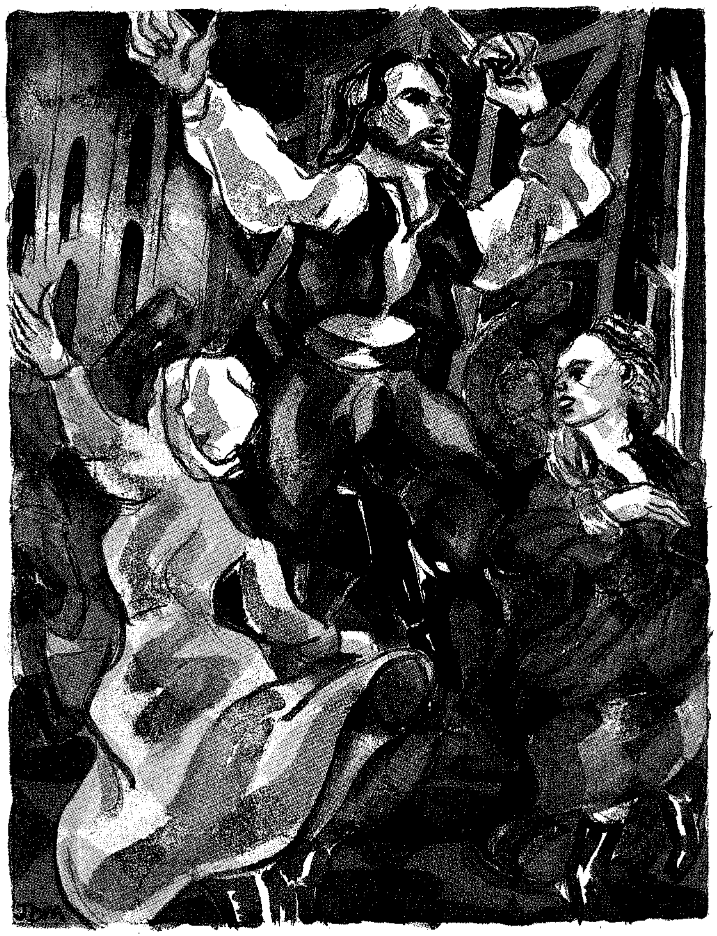
In the films, the story is pitched as a psychological thriller, with the drama hinging on whether or not Arnaud is authentic. The musical's director and co-adapter, the innovative Declan Donnellan, has changed the game, choosing to show the audience Arnaud's hand and Bertrande's collusion in the ruse, thus robbing the saga of its element of suspense. It's unfair to Donnellan, whose productions of "As You Like It" and Stephen Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd" are among the high-water marks of recent contemporary British theatre, to dismiss such tampering as cavalier. As ever, Donnellan's impulse is a cunning bit of theatrical pragmatism: an attempt, which finally defeats him, to pull a rabbit out of the composer Claude-Michel Schönberg's empty hat. By making the village of Artigate—and its collective unconscious—the villain of the piece, Donnellan brings the ensemble into play, taking the musical out of the realm of psychology and into that of sociology: from penetration to generalization. This finesses both the inadequacy of the sung-through musical to analyze personality or convey intellectual complexity and the nondescript score of Schönberg, who has "Miss Saigon" and "Les Misérables" to his bank credit.

Schönberg writes in a style that might be called "third-person majestic"; it's a kind of Louis Vuitton bag of elegant flourishes. He decorates the hectic medieval village life with great washes of florid, theatrically static sound that, in its chic pomposity, won't even risk vulgarity. It's all crescendo and glissando without "vo-do-de-o-do." Even when the lyricist, Edward Hardy, who was set the unenviable task of writing literate songs to evoke an illiterate age, manages an amusing number—as in "Sleeping on Our Own," a lament of three village crones about their dead husbands—the music is unsmiling. (Additional lyrics have been provided by Herbert Kretzmer and Alain Boublil, who were also co-authors of the book.) Sometimes, however, Schönberg and Hardy are incidentally hilarious. "Charivari," a mighty big word that according to my dictionary means "a serenade of 'rough music' . . . in mockery and derision of incongruous or unpopular marriages," trips easily off the tongues of the vindictive Artigate peasants:

Charivari terror comes
In the pipes—from the drums
Charivari picks a fight
Charivari night.

The rough-and-tumble of this well-staged number is intended to express the fury of the people at the real Martin Guerre, who can't produce a Catholic heir—which means, in this version, that the feudal village will pass into Protestant hands. The villagers go on a rampage, surrounding Bertrande's house in what, I swear, sounds like every B-movie Indian war party that has ever appeared on the horizon to surround the covered wagons.

The evening is blighted more by the genre's intellectual pretensions than by its production, which is technically expert. The curtain comes up on the designer Nick Ormerod's moody pine forest, which, aided by David Hersey's crepuscular lighting, gives a sense of solitude and grandeur to the Pyrenean foothills where the peasants scratch out their existence. Ormerod also provides a skeletal timber jungle gym whose configurations revolve into a variety of emblematic medieval locales: village, home, hall, church, court, jail. Ormerod and Donnellan are old collaborators—co-artistic directors of the influential theatre company Cheek by Jowl—but Donnellan's work with a new collaborator, the choreographer Bob Avian, gives the show its most imaginative element. Avian and Donnellan have evolved a vocabulary of movement for the peasants which liberates the musical from the usual medieval embarrassments of Bruegel bawdy, where men are men and cows are codpieces. Here, the villagers do a sort of fluid clog dancing that conveys both folk vigor and folk violence. They dance first in the field, then at the wedding of Bertrande (Juliette Caton) and Martin (Matt Rawle); they dance in protest of the couple's childless union; they dance to test Arnaud (played by Iain Glen, a fine Shakespearean actor making an unsteady musical début); and before the village runs amok in sectarian violence they dance to express their bloodlust. Avian's choreography is at its most thrilling in "I Will Make You Proud," as the ensemble, egged on by Bertrande's spurned suitor, the Catholic rabble-rouser Guillaume (well sung by the fierce Jérôme Pradon), stabs, stomps, and stalks the Protestants in the night, sending long, eerie shadows against the green cyclorama downstage.



Iain Glen as the impostor Arnaud, the embodiment of the villagers' faith in the unknown.

JOHN DEWE MATHEWS

Inevitably, the dancing takes on more of the narrative load than, finally, it can shoulder. Arnaud's manipulation of the villagers of Artigate—the fact that he knew so much about the citizens and about Guerre—is one of the tale's enduring conundrums. Here, the con is danced. Arnaud is circled by the villagers and clumsily picks up their rhythm. Then, as his self-assurance grows, they fall into line with him. The villagers project their hope for salvation onto Arnaud, who is literally the answer to their prayers. Bertrande is now pregnant; a Catholic heir, so they fondly think, insures their land against Protestant encroachment. Arnaud, a man without a history, is the shaggy, genial embodiment of the villagers' faith in the unknown: they see in him what they want to see. But, while the dancing makes the point visually, it doesn't clinch it emotionally. The sensational only compounds the musical's notional narrative.

With the story of Martin Guerre transformed into a metaphor of sectarian violence, the plot turns on Bertrande's conversion to Protestantism. Here, in true religious fashion, the musical abandons sense altogether. Bertrande endures a loveless marriage, humiliation, and abandonment for all those years, and then, having been unable to stand up to her family, her husband, or her village, she suddenly stands up against the Church, the way people do in musicals. After her confessor suggests that she marry Guillaume, she is incensed. "I will never / Break my vows," she sings, and proceeds to break her confirmation vow. This is as inept as only a sung-through musical can make it: a quick six lines suffice for metaphysical quandary. "Even God has betrayed me," she confides to Catherine, a closet Prot who reasons that Bertrande has been praying to the wrong Guy:

We've made a new church
There we can pray
Come now and join us
I'll lead the way.

Arnaud converts just as suddenly and unconvincingly. "If I share in your life / I must share in your faith," he sings. Soon, they're exposed, hounded, and brought to trial in a noisy courtroom full of spectacle and sanctimony:

We are caught like captive flies
In the web we're weaving.
Day by day and year by year
Tell me, who are the impostors here.

The musical makes this flimflammery seem like meaning. It wants to abhor the forced simplicities of fundamentalism while embracing, in its own crowd-pleasing simplification, the commercial theatre's fundamentalism about audience comfort. In the end, Arnaud is murdered not by the community but by the firebrand Guillaume. Martin Guerre becomes a solid citizen and a willing husband. Bertrande, however, takes politically correct leave of him, going off to single-parenthood and quality time with her daughter. "Martin Guerre" ends with a plea for tolerance and forgiveness: the curtain falls on the ensemble as they work the land, singing of peace, prayer, and love. Nonetheless, at the theatre, all handbags are checked for bombs, just in case. ◆

SHOUTS & MURMURS

OFFICIAL BACK PAGE OF THE SUMMER OLYMPICS

BY BRUCE McCALL

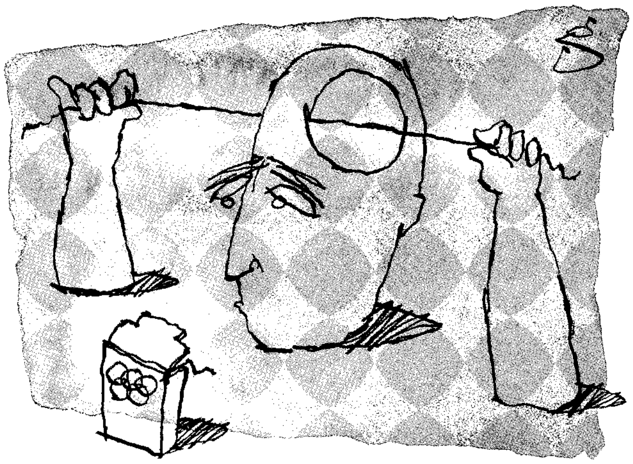
Officials with the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games said there would be no Games without the corporations that pay the bill, as much as $40 million to be an "official" import car, communications system or salted snack food.—*The Times.*

BANG! Like the starter's pistol in the single men's freestyle open-baton sixty-furlong seven-man-relay sprint, every opening paragraph *unleashes a sudden torrent of energy*—and with it the dream of expanding the parameters of human achievement. In fact, opening paragraphs have been reminding Americans of the quality difference between "Call me a cab" and "Call me Ishmael" since before the burning of Atlanta. Just one more reason we're proud to be the OFFICIAL OPENING PARAGRAPH OF THE 1996 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES.

But whoa! We see ourselves as a whole lot more than just blah-blah and yackety-yak. We see ourselves as an Olympic-size team of the super-skilled verbal powerhouses that you use for communicating every day. Indo-European, Old English, Ancient Greek, Origin Unknown—just like Olympic athletes, we come here from around the globe, each and every one of us with a special skill and a unique task to perform, in your mind, out of your mouth, on your tongue, and on this page. And, like a crew of Olympic scullers, we're all pulling together to make these the swiftest, most daring sentiments on this page, in this magazine, in the world. We're the OFFICIAL WORDS OF THE 1996 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES. And we think that's something to shout about!

Of course, there'll be more runners-up than winners as the 1996 Olympiad unfolds in Atlanta. We understand. We're forty-three-time Bronze Medal winners in the sport of mediocrity—the first name in third-rate. We stand for the half- and chicken-hearted, for quitters everywhere. So for every also-ran who whines "I got screwed" and gives up long before the finish line, for every *dream of Olympic glory that ends in* sour grapes, we're there for you, every stumbling step of the way. We're the OFFICIAL PATHETIC ALIBI OF THE 1996 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES.

But let's never forget that it takes something extra special to make an Olympic athlete—just as it takes billions and billions of oxygen and hydrogen atoms joined together and floating in a warm, sticky atmosphere to make an Olympic athlete really sweat. Magic preserver of cigars and tropical plants, mother of mildew, kissin' cousin to the invisible life-giving gas called "air" (a gas that keeps the Olympic flame burning), it's a lot more than hot air—it's the OFFICIAL HUMIDITY OF THE 1996 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES.



COURTNEY GRANNER

And just to your right, doing a job as inconspicuously as a backstop catching errant balls in an Olympic Ping-Pong finals match, is a trio of steely heroes pulling together what would otherwise be a paper haystack—the OFFICIAL STAPLES OF THE 1996 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES.

Of course, we haven't forgotten you. How could we? When you stand up af*ter reading this, you'll be walking just a* little bit taller. One minute a La-Z-Boy Lizard—betting your spouse a trip to the fridge on who has the edge in the women's hundred-metre vine climb, the Sri Lankan smoothy or the gal from Indiana—the next minute an OFFICIAL GRAND-PRIZE WINNER OF THE OLYMPIC BILLION-DOLLAR "WHERE'S THE TORCH RIGHT NOW?" SWEEPSTAKES.

C'mon, you say, I didn't just ride into town on the turnip truck! But, if you had, let's hope it was the OFFICIAL TURNIP TRUCK OF THE 1996 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES (not affiliated with the OFFICIAL TURNIP OF THE 1996 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES).

And if *that's* not insult enough to your intelligence, try us. We're the exclusive OFFICIAL INSULT TO YOUR INTELLIGENCE OF THE 1996 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES, and we forked over big bucks up front for the privilege, insulting our *own* intelligence in the bargain. But not quite the ransom we'd have to pay to horn in on the OFFICIAL LAST LINE OF THE CLOSING PARAGRAPH OF THE OFFICIAL BACK PAGE OF THE 1996 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES.

Bidding starts at one billion dollars. ♦

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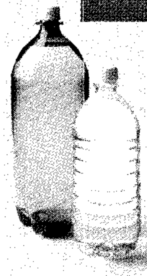

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